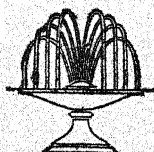


# ANDERSEN'S FAIRY TALES

*by*  
 HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN



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# THE SNOW QUEEN

IN SEVEN PARTS

## *Part the First*

WHICH TREATS OF THE MIRROR AND ITS FRAGMENTS

LISTEN ! We are beginning our story ! When we arrive at the end of it we shall, it is to be hoped, know more than we do now. There was once a magician ! a wicked magician !! a most wicked magician !!! Great was his delight at having constructed a mirror possessing this peculiarity—that everything good and beautiful, when reflected in it, shrank up almost to nothing, whilst those things that were ugly and useless were magnified, and made to appear ten times worse than before.

The loveliest landscapes reflected in this mirror looked like boiled spinach ; and the handsomest persons appeared ugly, or as if standing upon their heads ; their features being so distorted that their friends could never have recognised them. Moreover, if one of them had a freckle, he might be sure that it would seem to spread over the nose and mouth ; and if a good or pious thought glanced across his mind, a wrinkle was seen in the mirror.

All this the magician thought highly entertaining, and he chuckled with delight at his own clever invention. Those who frequented the school

of magic where he taught, spread abroad the fame of this wonderful mirror, and declared that by its means the world and its inhabitants might be seen now for the first time as they really are.

They carried the mirror from place to place, till at last there was no country or person that had not been misrepresented in it. Its admirers now must needs fly up to the sky with it, to see if they could not carry on their sport even there. But the higher they flew the more wrinkled did the mirror become ; they could scarcely hold it together. They flew on and on, higher and higher, till at last the mirror trembled so fearfully that it escaped from their hands, and fell to the earth, breaking into millions, billions, and trillions of pieces.

And then it caused far greater unhappiness than before, for fragments of it, scarcely so large as a grain of sand, would be flying about in the air, and sometimes get into people's eyes, causing them to view everything the wrong way or to have eyes only for what was perverted and corrupt ; each little fragment having retained the peculiar properties of the entire mirror. Some people were so unfortunate as to receive a little splinter into their hearts—that was terrible ! The heart became cold and hard, like a lump of ice. Some pieces were large enough to be used as window-panes, but it was of no use to look at one's friends through such panes as those. Other fragments were made into spectacles, and then what trouble people had with setting and re-setting them !

The wicked magician was greatly amused with all this, and he laughed till his sides ached.

There are still some little splinters of this mischievous mirror flying about in the air. We shall hear more about them very soon.

*Part the Second*

A LITTLE BOY AND A LITTLE GIRL

IN a large town, where there are so many houses and inhabitants that there is not room enough for all the people to have a little garden of their own, and where many are obliged to content themselves with keeping a few plants in pots, there dwelt two poor children, whose garden was somewhat larger than a flower-pot.

They were not brother and sister, but they loved each other as much as if they had been, and their parents lived in two attics exactly opposite. The roof of one neighbour's house nearly joined the other—the gutter ran along between—and there was in each roof a little window, so that you could stride across the gutter from one window to the other.

The parents of each child had a large wooden box in which grew herbs for kitchen use, and they had placed these boxes upon the gutter, so near that they almost touched each other. A beautiful little rose-tree grew in each box, scarlet runners entwined their long shoots over the windows, and, uniting with the branches of the rose trees, formed a flowery arch across the street. The boxes were very high, and the children knew that they might not climb over them, but they often obtained leave to sit on their little stools, under the rose-trees,

and thus they passed many a delightful hour.

But when winter came there was an end to these pleasures. The windows were often frozen over, and then they heated halfpence on the stove, held the warm copper against the frozen pane, and thus made a little round peep-hole, behind which would sparkle a bright gentle eye—one from each window.

The little boy was called Kay, the little girl's name was Gerda. In summer-time they could get out of the window and jump over to each other; but in winter there were stairs to run down, and stairs to run up, and sometimes the wind roared, and the snow fell out of doors.

"Those are the white bees swarming there!" said the old grandmother.

"Have they a Queen bee?" asked the little boy; for he knew that the real bees have one.

"They have," said the grandmother. "She flies yonder where they swarm so thickly; she is the largest of them, and never remains upon the earth, but flies up again into the black cloud. Sometimes on a winter's night she flies through the streets of the town, and breathes with her frosty breath upon the windows, and then they are covered with strange and beautiful forms like trees and flowers."

"Yes, I have seen them!" said both the children—they knew that this was true.

"Can the Snow Queen come in here?" asked the little girl.

"If she do come in," said the boy, "I will put her on the warm stove, and then she will melt."

And the grandmother stroked his hair and told him some stories.

That same evening, after little Kay had gone home, and was half undressed, he crept upon the chair by the window and peeped through the little round hole.

Just then a few snow-flakes fell outside, and one, the largest of them, remained lying on the edge of one of the flower-pots.

The snow-flake appeared to grow larger and larger, and at last took the form of a lady dressed in the finest white crape, her attire being composed of millions of star-like particles. She was exquisitely fair and delicate, but entirely of ice—glittering, dazzling ice ; her eyes gleamed like two bright stars, but there was no rest or repose in them.

She nodded at the window, and beckoned with her hand. The little boy was frightened and jumped down from the chair ; he then fancied he saw a large bird fly past the window.

There was a clear frost next day, and soon afterwards came spring ; the trees and flowers budded, the swallows built their nests, the windows were opened, and the children sat once more in their little garden upon the gutter that ran along the roofs of the houses.

The roses blossomed beautifully that summer, and the little girl had learned a hymn in which there was something about roses ; it reminded her of her own. So she sang it to the little boy, and he sang it with her.

“ Our roses bloom and fade away, ~  
Our Infant Lord abides alway ;  
May we be blessed his face to see,  
And ever little children be ! ” ✓



And the little ones held each other by the hand, kissed the roses, and looked up into the blue sky, talking away all the time. What glorious summer days were those ! How delightful it was to sit under those rose-trees, which seemed as if they never intended to leave off blossoming ! One day, Kay and Gerda were sitting looking at their picture-book full of birds and animals, when suddenly—the clock on the old church tower was just striking five—Kay exclaimed, “Oh, dear ! what was that shooting pain in my heart ? and now again, something has certainly got into my eye !”

The little girl turned and looked at him. He winked his eyes ; no, there was nothing to be seen.

“I believe it is gone,” said he ; but gone it was not. It was one of those glass splinters from the Magic Mirror, the wicked glass which made everything great and good reflected in it to appear little and hateful, and which magnified everything ugly and mean. Poor Kay had also received a splinter in his heart ; it would now become hard and cold like a lump of ice. He felt the pain no longer, but the splinter was there. “Why do you cry ?” asked he ; “you look so ugly when you cry ! there is nothing the matter with me.—Fie !” exclaimed he again, “this rose has an insect in it, and just look at this ! After all, they are ugly roses, and it is an ugly box they grow in !” Then he kicked the box, and tore off the roses.

“Oh, Kay, what are you doing ?” cried the little girl ; but, when he saw how it grieved her, he tore off another rose, and jumped down

through his own window, away from his once dear little Gerda.

Ever afterwards when she brought forward the picture-book, he called it a baby's book; and when her grandmother told stories, he interrupted her with a "but," and sometimes, whenever he could manage it, he would get behind her, put on her spectacles, and speak just as she did; he did this in a very droll manner, and so people laughed at him.

Very soon he could mimic everybody in the street. All that was singular and awkward about them Kay could imitate, and his neighbours said, "What a remarkable head that boy has!" But no, it was the glass splinter which had fallen into his eye, the glass splinter which had pierced into his heart—it was these which made him regardless whose feelings he wounded, and even made him tease the little Gerda who loves him so fondly.

His games were now quite different from what they used to be; they were so rational! One winter's day when it was snowing, he came out with a large burning-glass in his hand, and, holding up the skirts of his blue coat, let the snow-flakes fall upon them. "Now look through the glass, Gerda!" said he, returning to the house. Every snow-flake seemed much larger, and resembled a splendid flower, or a star with ten points; they were quite beautiful. "See, how curious!" said Kay, "these are far more interesting than real flowers—there is not a single blemish in them; they would be quite perfect if only they did not melt."

Soon after this Kay came in again, with thick

gloves on his hands, and his sledge slung across his back. He called out to Gerda, "I have got leave to drive on the great square where the other boys play!" and away he went.

The boldest boys in the square used to fasten their sledges firmly to the wagons of the country people, and thus drive a good way along with them; this they thought particularly pleasant. While they were in the midst of their play, a large sledge painted white passed by; in it sat a person wrapped in a rough white fur, and wearing a rough white cap. When the sledge had driven twice round the square, Kay bound to it his little sledge, and was carried on with it. On they went, faster and faster, into the next street.

The person who drove the large sledge turned round and nodded kindly to Kay, just as if they had been old acquaintances; and every time Kay was going to loose his little sledge, turned and nodded again; as if to signify that he must stay: so Kay sat still, and they passed through the gates of the town.

Then the snow began to fall so thickly that the little boy could not see his own hand, but he was still carried on. He tried hastily to unloose the cords and free himself from the large sledge, but it was of no use; his little carriage could not be unfastened, and glided on swift as the wind. Then he cried out as loud as he could, but no one heard him—the snow fell and the sledge flew. Every now and then it made a spring as if diving over hedges and ditches. He was very much frightened; he would have repeated "Our Father," but he could remember nothing but the multiplication table.

The snow-flakes seemed larger and larger, and at last they looked like great white fowls. All at once they fell aside, the large sledge stopped, and the person who drove it rose from the seat. He saw that the cap and coat were entirely of snow ; that it was a lady, tall and slender, and dazzlingly white—it was the Snow Queen !

“ We have driven fast,” said she, “ but no one likes to be frozen ; creep under my bear-skin ;” and she seated him in the sledge by her side, and spread her cloak around him. He felt as if he were sinking into a drift of snow.

“ Are you still cold ? ” asked she ; and then she kissed his brow. Oh ! her kiss was colder than ice. It went to his heart, although that was half frozen already ; he thought he should die. It was, however, only for a moment ; directly afterwards he was quite well, and no longer felt the intense cold around.

“ My sledge ! do not forget my sledge ! ” He thought first of that—it was fastened to one of the white fowls, which flew behind with it on his back. The Snow Queen kissed Kay again, and he entirely forgot little Gerda, her grandmother, and all at home.

“ Now you must have no more kisses ! ” said she, “ else I should kiss thee to death.”

Kay looked at her, she was so beautiful ; a more intelligent, more lovely countenance, he could not imagine. She no longer appeared to him to be ice, cold ice, as at the time when she sat outside the window and beckoned to him ; in his eyes she was perfect ; he felt no fear. He told her how well he could reckon in his head, even fractions ; that he knew the number of square

miles of every country, and the number of the inhabitants contained in different towns.

She smiled, and then it occurred to him that, after all, he did not yet know so very much. He looked up into the wide, wide space, and she flew with him high up into the black cloud while the storm was raging ; it seemed now to Kay as if it were singing songs of olden time.

They flew over woods and over lakes, over sea and over land ; beneath them the cold wind whistled, the wolves howled, the snow glittered, and the black crow flew cawing over the plain ; while above them shone the moon, clear and tranquil.

Thus did Kay spend the long, long winter night ; all day he slept at the feet of the Snow Queen.

### *Part the Third*

#### THE ENCHANTED FLOWER GARDEN

BUT how fared it with little Gerda when Kay never returned ? Where could he be ? No one knew, no one could give any account of him. The boys said that they had seen him fasten his sledge to another larger and very handsome one which had driven into the street, and thence through the gates of the town.

No one knew where he was, and many were the tears that were shed. Little Gerda wept much and long, for the boys said he must be dead—he must have been drowned in the river that flowed not far from the town. Oh, how long and

dismal the winter days were now ! At last came the spring, with its warm sunshine.

"Alas, Kay is dead and gone," said little Gerda.

"That I do not believe," said the sunshine.

"He is dead and gone," said she to the swallows.

"That we do not believe," returned they ; and at last little Gerda herself did not believe it.

"I will put on my new red shoes," said she one morning ; "those which Kay has never seen ; and then I will go down to the river and ask after him."

It was quite early. She kissed her old grandmother, who was still sleeping, put on her red shoes, and went alone through the gates of the town towards the river.

"Is it true," said she, "that thou hast taken my little playfellow away ? I will give thee my red shoes if thou wilt restore him to me !"

And the wavelets of the river flowed towards her in a manner which she fancied was unusual ; she fancied that they intended to accept her offer. So she took off her red shoes—though she prized them more than anything else she possessed—and threw them into the stream ; but they fell near the shore, and the little waves bore them back to her, as though they would not take from her what she most prized, seeing they had not got little Kay. However, she thought she had not thrown the shoes far enough ; so she stepped into a little boat which lay among the reeds by the shore, and, standing at the farthest end of it, threw them thence into the water. The boat was not fastened, and her movements in it caused it to glide away from the shore. She saw this, and

hastened to get out ; but. by the time she reached the other end of the boat, it was more than a yard distant from the land ; she could not escape, and the boat glided on.

Little Gerda was much frightened and began to cry, but no one besides the sparrows heard her, and they could not carry her back to the land. However, they flew along the banks, and sang, as if to comfort her, " Here we are, here we are ! " The boat followed the stream. Little Gerda sat in it quite still ; her red shoes floated behind her, but they could not overtake the boat, which glided along faster than they did.

Beautiful were the shores of that river ; lovely flowers, stately old trees, and bright green hills dotted with sheep and cows, were seen in abundance, but not a single human being.

" Perhaps the river may bear me to my dear Kay," thought Gerda, and then she became more cheerful, and amused herself for hours with looking at the lovely country around her. At last she glided past a large cherry garden, in which stood a little cottage with thatched roof and curious red and blue windows. Two wooden soldiers stood at the door, who presented arms when they saw the little vessel approach.

Gerda called to them, thinking that they were alive ; but they, naturally enough, made no answer. She came close up to them, for the stream drifted the boat to the land.

Gerda called still louder, and an old lady came out of the house, leaning on a crutch ; she wore a large hat, with beautiful flowers painted on it.

" Poor little child ! " said the old woman,



"the mighty flowing river has indeed borne thee a long, long way ;" and she walked right into the water, seized the boat with her crutch, drew it to land, and took out the little girl.

Gerda was glad to be on dry land again, although she was a little afraid of the strange old lady.

"Come and tell me who thou art, and how thou camest hither," said she.

And Gerda told her all, and the old lady shook her head, and said, "Hem ! hem !" And when Gerda asked if she had seen little Kay, the lady said that he had not arrived there yet, but that he would be sure to come soon, and that in the meantime Gerda must not be sad. She might stay with her, might eat her cherries, and look at her flowers, which were prettier than any picture-book, and could each tell her a story.

She then took Gerda by the hand ; they went together into the cottage, and the old lady shut the door. The windows were very high, and the panes were of different coloured glass—red, blue, and yellow—so that when the bright daylight streamed through them, various and beautiful were the hues reflected into the room.

Upon a table in the middle was a plate of fine cherries, and of these Gerda was allowed to eat as many as she liked. And while she was eating them, the old dame combed her hair with a golden comb, and the bright flaxen ringlets fell on each side of her pretty, gentle face, which looked as round and as fresh as a rose.

"I have long wished for such a dear little girl," said the old lady. "We shall see if we cannot live happily together." And, as she combed



little Gerda's hair, the child thought less and less of her foster-brother Kay, for the old lady was an enchantress. She did not, however, follow magic for the sake of mischief, but merely for her own amusement.

Now she wished very much to keep little Gerda, to live with her ; so, fearing that if Gerda saw her roses, she would be reminded of her own flowers and of little Kay, and that then she might run away, she went out into the garden, and held her crutch over all her rose-bushes. At once, although they were full of leaves and blossoms, they sank into the black earth, and no one would have guessed that such plants had ever grown there. —

Then she led Gerda into this flower garden. Oh, how beautiful and how fragrant it was ! Flowers of all seasons and all climes grew there in fulness of beauty—certainly no picture-book could be compared with it.

Gerda jumped with delight, and played among the flowers till the sun set behind the tall cherry-trees. Then a pretty little bed, with crimson silk cushions, stuffed with blue violet leaves, was prepared for her, and here she slept so sweetly, and had such dreams as a queen might have on her marriage eve.

The next day she again played among the flowers in the warm sunshine, and many more days were spent in the same manner. Gerda knew every flower in the garden, but, numerous as they were, it seemed to her that one was wanting—she could not tell which.

She was sitting, one day, looking at her hostess's hat, which had flowers painted on it, and,

behold, the loveliest among them was a rose ! The old lady had entirely forgotten the painted rose on her hat, when she made the real roses to disappear from her garden and sink into the ground.—This is often the case when things are done hastily.

“What !” cried Gerda, “are there no roses in the garden ?” And she ran from one bed to another, sought and sought again, but no rose was to be found. She sat down and wept, and it so chanced that her tears fell on a spot where a rose-tree had formerly stood, and as soon as her warm tears had moistened the earth, the bush shot up anew, as fresh and as blooming as it was before it had sunk into the ground. Gerda threw her arms around it, kissed the blossoms, and immediately recalled to memory the beautiful roses at home, and her little playfellow Kay.

“Oh, how could I stay here so long !” exclaimed the little maiden. “I left my home to seek for Kay. Do you know where he is ?” she asked of the roses ; “think you that he is dead ?”

“Dead he is not,” said the roses. “We have been down in the earth ; the dead are there, but not Kay.”

“I thank you,” said little Gerda ; and she went to the other flowers, bent low over their cups, and asked, “Know you not where little Kay is ?”

But every flower stood in the sunshine dreaming its own little tale. They related their stories to Gerda, but none of them knew anything of Kay.

“And what think you ?” said the tiger-lily.

“Listen to the drums beating, boom ! boom ! They have but two notes—always boom ! boom !

Listen to the dirge the women are singing ! Listen to the chorus of priests ! Clothed in her long red robes stands the Hindoo wife on the funeral pile, the flames blaze around her and her dead husband, but the Hindoo wife thinks not of the dead. She thinks only of the living ; and the anguish which consumes her spirit is keener than the fire which will soon turn her body to ashes. Can the flame of the heart expire amid the flames of the funeral pile ? ”

“ I do not understand that at all,” said little Gerda.

“ That is my tale ! ” said the tiger-lily.

“ What says the convolvulus ? ”

“ Hanging over a narrow mountain causeway, behold an ancient baronial castle. Thick evergreens grow amongst the time-stained walls, their leafy branches entwine about the balcony, and there stands a beautiful maiden. She bends over the balustrades and fixes her eyes with eager hopes on the road winding beneath. The rose hangs not fresher and lovelier on its stem than she ; the apple-blossom, which the wind threatens every moment to tear from its branch, is not more fragile and trembling. Listen to the rustling of her silken robe ! Listen to her half-whispered words, ‘ He comes not yet ! ’ ”

“ Is it Kay you mean ? ” asked little Gerda.

“ I do but tell you my tale—my dream,” replied the convolvulus.

“ What says the little snowdrop ? ”

“ Between two trees hangs a swing. Two pretty little maidens, their dress as white as snow, and with long green ribbons fluttering from their hats, sit and swing themselves in it. Their

brother stands up in the swing, he has thrown his arms round the ropes to keep himself steady for in one hand he holds a little cup, in the other a pipe made of clay ; he is blowing soap bubbles. The swing moves and the bubbles fly upwards with bright, ever-changing colours ; the last hovers on the edge of the pipe, and moves with the wind. The swing is still in motion and the little black dog, almost as light as the soap bubbles, rises on his hind feet, and tries to get into the swing also. Away goes the swing; the dog falls, is out of temper, and barks ; he is laughed at, and the bubbles burst. A swinging board, a frothy, fleeting image is my song."

"What you describe may be all very pretty, but you speak so mournfully, and there is nothing about Kay.

"What say the hyacinths ?"

"There were three fair sisters ; transparent and delicate they were. The kirtle of the one was red, that of the second blue, of the third pure white. Hand in hand they danced in the moonlight beside the quiet lake ; they were not fairies, but daughters of men. Sweet was the fragrance when the maidens vanished into the wood ; the fragrance grew stronger. Three biers, on which lay the fair sisters, glided out from the depths of the wood, and floated upon the lake ; the glow-worms flew shining around like little hovering lamps. Sleep the dancing maidens, or are they dead ? The odour from the flowers tells us they are corpses, the evening bells peal out their dirge."

"You make me quite sad," said little Gerda.

"Your fragrance is so strong I cannot help

thinking of the dead maidens. Alas ! and is little Kay dead ? The roses have been under the earth, and they say no ! ”

“ Ding dong ! ding dong ! ” rang the hyacinth bells. “ We toll not for little Kay—we know him not ! We do but sing our own song, the only one we know ! ”

And Gerda went to the buttercup, which shone so brightly from among her smooth green leaves.

“ Thou art like a little bright sun,” said Gerda ; “ tell me, if thou canst, where I may find my playfellow.”

And the buttercup glittered brightly, and looked at Gerda. What song could the buttercup sing ? Neither was hers about Kay.

“ One bright spring morning, the sun shone warmly upon a little courtyard, the bright beams streamed down the white walls of a neighbouring house, and close by grew the first yellow flower of spring, glittering like gold in the warm sunshine. An old grandmother sat without in her arm-chair, her granddaughter, a pretty, lowly maiden, had just returned home from a short visit ; she kissed her grandmother ; there was gold, pure gold, in that loving kiss :

“ ‘ Gold was the flower !

Gold the fresh, bright, morning hour ! ’ ”

“ That is my little story,” said the buttercup.

“ My poor old grandmother ! ” sighed Gerda ; “ yes, she must be wishing for me, just as she wished for little Kay. But I shall soon go home again, and take Kay with me. It is of no use to ask the flowers about him ; they know only their own song ; they can give me no information.”

And she folded her little frock round her, that she might run the faster ; but, in jumping over the narcissus, it caught her foot, as if wishing to stop her : so she turned and looked at the tall yellow flower, " Have you any news to give me ? " She bent over the narcissus, waiting for an answer.

And what said the narcissus ?

" I can look at myself ! I can see myself ! Oh, how sweet is my fragrance ! " Up in the little attic-chamber stands a little dancer. She rests sometimes on one leg, sometimes on two. She has trampled the whole world under her feet ; she is nothing but an illusion. She pours water from a tea-pot upon a piece of cloth she holds in her hand—it is her bodice ; cleanliness is a fine thing ! Her white dress hangs on the hook ; that has also been washed by the water from the tea-pot, and dried on the roof of the house. She puts it on, and wraps a saffron-coloured handkerchief round her neck ; it makes the dress look all the whiter. With one leg extended, there she stands, as though on a stalk. " I can look at myself ! I can see myself ! "

" I don't care if you do," said Gerda. " You need not have told me that ! " and away she ran to the end of the garden.

The gate was closed, but she pressed upon the rusty lock till it broke. The gate sprang open, and little Gerda, with bare feet, ran out into the wide world. Three times she looked back, but there was no one following her ; she ran till she could run no longer, and then sat down to rest upon a large stone. Casting a glance around,



she saw that the summer was past, that it was now late in the autumn. Of course, she had not remarked this in the enchanted garden, where there were sunshine and flowers all the year round.

"How long I must have stayed there!" said little Gerda. "So, it is now autumn! Well, then, there is no time to lose!" and she rose to pursue her way.

Oh, how sore and weary were her little feet! and all around looked cold and barren. The long willow-leaves had already turned yellow, and the dew trickled down from them like water. The leaves fell off the trees, one by one; the sloe alone bore fruit, and its berries were sharp and bitter. Cold, and gray, and sad seemed the world to her that day.

### *Part the Fourth*

#### THE PRINCE AND THE PRINCESS

GERDA was again obliged to stop and take rest. Suddenly a large raven hopped upon the snow in front of her, saying, "Caw! Caw!—Good-day! Good-day!" He sat for some time on the withered branch of a tree just opposite, eyeing the little maiden, and wagging his head; and he now came forward to make acquaintance, and to ask her whither she was going all alone.

That word "alone" Gerda understood right well—she felt how sad a meaning it has. She told the raven the history of her life and fortunes, and asked if he had seen Kay.

And the raven nodded his head, half doubtfully, and said, "That is possible—possible."

"Do you think so?" exclaimed the little girl; and she kissed the raven so vehemently that it is a wonder she did not squeeze him to death.

"More moderately—moderately!" said the raven. "I think I know. I think it may be little Kay; but he has certainly forsaken thee for the princess."

"Dwells he with a princess?" asked Gerda.

"Listen to me," said the raven; "but it is so difficult to speak your language! Do you understand Ravenish? If so, I can tell you much better."

"No! I have never learned Ravenish," said Gerda, "but my grandmother knew it, and Magpie-language also. Oh, how I wish I had learned it!"

"Never mind," said the raven, "I will relate my story in the best manner I can, though bad will be the best;" and he told all he knew.

"In the kingdom in which we are now sitting, there dwells a princess—a very clever princess. All the newspapers in the world she has read, and forgotten them again, so clever is she. It is not long since she ascended the throne—which I have heard is not quite so agreeable a situation as one would fancy—and immediately after she began to sing a new song, the burden of which was this, 'Why should I not marry me?' 'There is some sense in this song!' said she; and she determined she would marry, but at the same time declared that the man whom she would choose, must be able to answer sensibly whenever people spoke



to him, and must be good for something else besides merely looking grand and stately.

"The ladies of the court were all drummed together, in order to be informed of her intention, at which they were highly delighted, and one exclaimed, 'That is just what I wish;' and another, that she had lately been thinking of the very same thing. Believe me," continued the raven, "every word I say is true, for I have a tame beloved one who hops at pleasure about the palace, and she has told me all this."

Of course, the beloved one was also a raven for birds of a feather flock together.

"Proclamations, adorned with borders of hearts, were immediately issued, in which, after giving the style and titles of the princess, it was set forth that every well-favoured youth was free to go to the palace and talk with the princess, and that whoever should speak in such wise as showed that he felt himself at home, there would be the one the princess would choose for her husband.

"Yes, indeed," continued the raven, "you may believe me; all this is as true as that I sit here. The people all crowded to the palace; there was famous pressing and squeezing; but it was all of no use, either the first or the second day. The young men could speak well enough while they were outside the palace gates, but, when they entered, and saw the royal guard in silver uniform, and the lackeys on the staircase in gold, and the spacious saloon all lighted up, they were quite confounded. *Public dining-room.*

"They stood before the throne where the princess sat, and when she spoke to them, they could only repeat the last word she had uttered, which,

*A footman's  
servant*

*in large  
reception  
room*

you know, it was not particularly interesting for her to hear over again. It was just as though they had been struck dumb the moment they entered the palace, for as soon as they got out they could talk fast enough. There was a regular procession constantly moving from the gates of the town to the gates of the palace.

"I was there, and saw it with my own eyes," said the raven. "They grew both hungry and thirsty whilst waiting at the palace, but no one could get even so much as a glass of water ; to be sure, some of them, wiser than the rest, had brought with them slices of bread-and-butter, but none would give any to his neighbour, for he thought to himself, ' Let him look hungry, and then the princess will be sure not to choose him.' "

"But Kay, little Kay, when did he come ?" asked Gerda. "Was he among the crowd ?"

"Presently, presently ; we have just come to him. On the third day arrived a youth with neither horse nor carriage ; gaily he marched up to the palace ; his eyes sparkled like yours ; he had long beautiful hair, but was very meanly clad."

"That was Kay !" exclaimed Gerda. "Oh, then I have found him," and she clapped her hands with delight.

"He carried a knapsack on his back," said the raven.

"No, not a knapsack," said Gerda, "a sledge, for he had a sledge with him when he left home."

"It is possible," rejoined the raven. "I did not look very closely, but this I heard from my beloved, that when he entered the palace gates and saw the royal guard in silver, and the

lackeys in gold upon the staircase, he did not seem the least confused, but nodded pleasantly and said to them, 'It must be very tedious standing out here, I prefer going in.'

"The halls glistened with light ; cabinet councillors and high officers were walking about barefooted and carrying golden keys. It was just a place to make a man solemn and silent ; and the youth's boots creaked horribly, yet he was not at all afraid."

"That most certainly was Kay !" said Gerda. "I know he had new boots ; I have heard them creak in my grandmother's room."

"Indeed, they did creak," said the raven ; "but he went merrily up to the princess, who was sitting upon a pearl as large as a spinning-wheel, while all the ladies of the court, with the maids-of-honour and their hand-maidens, ranged in order, stood on one side, and all the gentlemen-in-waiting, with their gentlemen, and their gentlemen's gentlemen, who also kept pages, stood ranged in order on the other side, and the nearer they were to the door the prouder they looked. The gentlemen's page, who always wears slippers, one dare hardly look at, so proudly he stands at the door."

"That must be dreadful !" said little Gerda. "And has Kay really won the princess ?"

"Had I not been a raven I should have won her myself, notwithstanding my being betrothed. The young man spoke as well as I speak when I converse in Ravenish ; that I have heard from my tame beloved. He was handsome and lively. 'I do not come to woo you,' he said, 'I have only come to hear the wisdom of the princess ;' and

he liked her much, and she liked him in return."

"Yes, to be sure, that was Kay," said Gerda ;  
"he was so clever, he could reckon in his head,  
even fractions ! Oh, will you not take me into  
the palace ?" *a numerical quantity; piece.*

"Ah ! that is easily said," replied the raven,  
"but how is it to be done ? I will talk it over with  
my tame beloved ; she will advise us what to do,  
for I must tell you that such a little girl as you  
are will never gain permission to enter publicly."

"Yes, I shall !" cried Gerda. "When Kay  
knows that I am here, he will immediately come  
out and fetch me." *Lattice 36*

"Wait for me at the trellis yonder," said the  
raven. He wagged his head and away he flew. *shook;*

The raven did not return till late in the evening. *missed*

"Caw, caw," said he. "My tame beloved  
greeted you kindly, and sends you a piece of bread  
which she took from the kitchen ; there is plenty  
of bread there, and you must certainly be hungry.  
It is not possible for you to enter the palace, for  
you have bare feet ; the royal guard in silver  
uniform, and the lackeys in gold, would never  
permit it ; but do not weep, you shall go there.  
My beloved knows a little back staircase leading  
to the sleeping apartments, and she knows also  
where to find the key."

And they went into the garden, down the  
grand avenue, where the leaves dropped upon  
them as they passed along, and, when the lights  
in the palace one by one had all been put out,  
the raven took Gerda to a back-door which stood  
half open.

Oh, how Gerda's heart beat with fear and  
expectation ! It was just as if she was about to

do something wrong, although she only wanted to know whether Kay was really there—yes, it must be he, she remembered so well his bright eyes and long hair. She would see if his smile were the same as it used to be when they sat together under the rose-trees. He would be so glad to see her, to hear how far she had come for his sake, how all at home mourned his absence. Her heart trembled with fear and joy.

They went up the staircase. A small lamp placed on a cabinet gave a glimmering light. On the floor stood the tame raven, who first turned her head on all sides, and then looked at Gerda, who made her curtsey, as her grandmother had taught her. *a woman, a respectful gesture made by bending the knees & lowering the body*

"My betrothed has told me much about you, my good young maiden," said the tame raven; "your adventures, too, are extremely interesting! If you will take the lamp, I will show you the way. We are going straight on, we shall not meet any one now."

"It seems to me as if some one were behind us," said Gerda; and, in fact, there was a rushing sound as of something passing. Strange-looking shadows flitted rapidly along the wall—horses with long, slender legs and fluttering manes, huntsmen, knights, and ladies.

"These are only dreams!" said the raven; "they come to amuse the great personages here at night; you will have a better opportunity of looking at them when you are in bed. I hope that, when you arrive at honours and dignities, you will show a grateful heart."

"Do not talk of that!" said the wood-raven. They now entered the first saloon; its walls

*Continued, entered into competition.*  
were covered with rose-coloured satin, embroidered with gold flowers. The Dreams rustled past them, but with such rapidity that Gerda could not see them. The apartments through which they passed vied with each other in splendour ; and at last they reached the sleeping hall.

In the centre of this room stood a pillar of gold resembling the stem of a large palm-tree, *Trunk* whose leaves of glass, costly glass, formed the ceiling ; and near the door, there hung from the tree, on thick golden stalks, two beds in the form of lilies. The one was white, and on it reposed the princess ; the other was red, and here must Gerda seek her playfellow, Kay.

She bent aside one of the red leaves and saw a brown neck. Oh, it must be Kay ! She called him aloud by his name ; held the lamp close to him. The Dreams again rushed by—he awoke, turned his head, and behold ! it was not Kay.

The prince resembled him only about the throat ; he was, however, young and handsome ; and the princess looked out from the white lily petals, and asked what was the matter. Then little Gerda wept and told her whole story, and what the ravens had done for her.

“ Poor child ! ” said the prince and princess ; and they praised the ravens, and said they were not at all angry with them. Such liberties must never be taken again in their palace, but this time they should be rewarded.

“ Would you like to fly away free to the woods ? ” asked the princess, addressing the ravens—“ or to have the appointment secured to you as court-ravens with the perquisites belonging to the kitchen, such as crumbs and leavings ? ”

A.F.T.

*casual payment in addition  
to salary belonging to an unemployed.*



And both the ravens bowed low and chose the appointment at court, for they thought of old age, and said it would be so comfortable to be well provided for in their declining years. Then the prince arose, and gave Gerda his bed to sleep in; and she folded her little hands, thinking, "How kind both men and animals are to me!"

She closed her eyes and sleep soundly and sweetly, and all the Dreams flitted about her: they looked like angels from heaven, and seemed to be drawing a sledge on which Kay sat. He nodded to her, but this was only fancy, for as soon as she awoke all the beautiful visions had vanished.

The next day she was dressed from head to foot in silk and velvet. She was invited to stay at the palace and enjoy all sorts of pleasures; but she begged only for a little carriage and a horse, and a pair of little boots—all she wished was to go out again into the wide world to seek Kay.

*convinced  
to keep  
the hands  
to stay* They gave her the boots, and a muff besides, she was dressed so prettily. And as soon as she was ready there drove up to the door a new carriage of pure gold, with the arms of the prince and princess glittering upon it like a star; the coachman, the footman, and outriders, all wearing gold crowns. The prince and princess themselves helped her into the carriage and wished her success.

The wood-raven, who was now married, accompanied her the first three miles; he sat by her side, for riding backwards was a thing he could not bear. The other raven stood at the door flapping her wings; she did not go with them on account of a headache she had felt ever

*F-luttered*

since she had received her appointment—a consequence of eating too much. The carriage was well provided with sugar-plums, fruit and gingerbread nuts.

“Farewell ! farewell !” cried the prince and princess. Little Gerda wept, and the raven wept out of sympathy. But his farewell was a far sorer trial ; he flew up to the branch of a tree and flapped his black wings at the carriage till it was out of sight.

### *Part the Fifth*

#### THE LITTLE ROBBER-MAIDEN

THEY drove through the dark, dark forest ; the carriage shone like a torch. Unfortunately its brightness attracted the eyes of the robbers who dwelt in the forest-shades ; they could not bear it.

“That is gold ! gold !” they cried. Forward they rushed, seized the horses, stabbed the outriders, coachman, and footmen to death, and dragged little Gerda out of the carriage.

“She is plump ; she is pretty ; she has been fed on nut-kernels,” said the old robber-wife, who had a long bristly beard, and eyebrows hanging like bushes over her eyes. “She is like a little fat lamb ; and how smartly she is dressed !” and she drew out her bright, glittering dagger. “Oh, oh !” cried the woman ; for at the very moment she had lifted her dagger to stab Gerda, her own wild and wilful daughter jumped upon her back and bit her ear violently. “You naughty child !” said the mother.



"She shall play with me," said the little robber-maiden; "she shall give me her muff and her pretty frock, and sleep with me in my bed!" And then she bit her mother again, till the robber-wife sprang up and shrieked with pain, whilst the robbers all laughed, saying, "Look at her playing with her young one!"

"I will get into the carriage;" and so spoiled and wayward was the little robber-maiden that she always had her own way. So she and Gerda sat together in the carriage, and drove over stock and stone farther and farther into the wood.

The little robber-maiden was about as tall as Gerda, but much stronger; she had broad shoulders, and a very dark skin; her eyes were quite black, and had an expression almost melancholy. She put her arm round Gerda's waist, and said, "She shall not kill thee so long as I love thee! Art thou not a princess?"

"No!" said Gerda; and then she told her all that had happened to her, and how much she loved little Kay.

The robber-maiden looked earnestly in her face, shook her head, and said, "She shall not kill thee, even if I do quarrel with thee; then, indeed, I would rather do it myself!" And she dried Gerda's tears, and put both her hands into the pretty muff that was so soft and warm.

The carriage at last stopped in the middle of the courtyard of the robbers' castle. This castle was half ruined. Crows and ravens flew out of the openings, and some fearfully large bull-dogs, looking as if they could devour a man in a moment, jumped round the carriage; they did not bark, for that was forbidden.

The maidens entered a large smoky hall, where, a tremendous fire was blazing on the stone floor.

The smoke rose up to the ceiling, seeking a way of escape, for there was no chimney. A large cauldron full of soup was boiling over the fire : while hares and rabbits were roasting on the spit. *a small pot to put through meat for roasting*

"Thou shalt sleep with me and my little pets to-night !" said the robber-maiden. Then they had some food, and afterwards went to the corner in which lay straw and a piece of carpet. Nearly

a hundred pigeons were perched on staves and laths around them ; they seemed to be asleep, but were startled when the little maidens

approached. *a round wooden vessel or cask*  
*A strip of wood. - a long narrow piece*

"These all belong to me," said Gerda's companion ; and, seizing hold of one of the nearest, she held the poor bird by the feet and swung it.

"Kiss it," said she, flapping it into Gerda's face.

"The rabble from the wood sit up there," continued she, pointing to a number of laths fastened across a hole in the wall. "Those are wood-pigeons ; they would fly away if I did not keep them shut up. And here is my old favourite!"

She pulled forward by the horn a reindeer who wore a bright copper ring round his neck, by which he was fastened to a large stone. "We

are obliged to chain him up, or he would run away from us : every evening I tickle his neck

with my sharp dagger ; it makes him fear me so much !" and the robber-maiden drew out a long dagger from a gap in the wall, and passed it over the reindeer's throat. The poor animal struggled and kicked, but the girl laughed, and then she pulled Gerda into bed with her. *to stick as to make stick with, or to touch*

"Will you keep the dagger in your hand whilst

you sleep?" asked Gerda, looking timidly at the dangerous plaything.

"I always sleep with my dagger by my side," replied the little robber-maiden; "one never knows what may happen. But now tell me all over again what you told me before about Kay, and the reason of your coming into the wide world all by your self."

And Gerda again related her history, and the wood-pigeons imprisoned above listened, but the others were fast asleep. The little robber-maiden threw one arm round Gerda's neck, and, holding the dagger with the other, was also soon asleep. One could hear her heavy breathing, but Gerda could not close her eyes throughout the night; she knew not what would become of her, whether she would even be suffered to live. The robbers sat round the fire drinking and singing. Oh, it was a dreadful night for the poor little girl!

Then spoke the wood-pigeons, "Coo, coo, coo! we have seen little Kay. A white fowl carried his sledge; he himself was in the Snow Queen's chariot, which passed through the wood whilst we sat in our nest. She breathed upon us young ones as she passed, and all died of her breath excepting us two—Coo, coo, coo!"

"What are you saying?" cried Gerda. "Where was the Snow Queen going? Do you know anything about it?"

"She travels most likely to Lapland, where ice and snow abide all the year round. Ask the reindeer bound to the rope there."

"Yes, ice and snow are there all through the year; it is a glorious land!" said the reindeer. "There, free and happy, one can roam through

the wide sparkling valleys ! There the Snow Queen has her summer-tent ; her strong castle is very far off, near the North Pole, on the island called Spitsbergen."

"Oh, Kay, dear Kay !" sighed Gerda.

"You must lie still," said the robber-maiden, "or I will thrust my dagger into your side."

When morning came Gerda repeated to her what the wood-pigeons had said, and the little robber-maiden looked grave for a moment, then nodded her head, saying, "No matter ! no matter ! Do you know where Lapland is ?" asked she of the reindeer.

"Who should know but me ?" returned the animal, his eyes kindling. "There was I born and bred ; there have I bounded over the wild icy plains !"

"Listen to me !" said the robber-maiden to Gerda ; "you see all our men are gone, my mother is still here and will remain, but towards noon she will drink a little out of the great flask, and after that she will sleep—then I will do something for you !"

And so saying she jumped out of bed, sprang upon her mother, pulled her by the beard, and said, "My own dear mam, good-morning !" and the mother caressed her so roughly that she was red and blue all over. However, it was from pure love.

When her mother was fast asleep, the robber-maiden went up to the reindeer and said, "I should have great pleasure in stroking you a few more times with my sharp dagger, for then you look so droll. But never mind ; I will unloose your chain and help you to escape, on condition

that you run as fast as you can to Lapland, and take this little girl to the castle of the Snow Queen, where her playfellow is. You must have heard her story, for she speaks loud enough, and you know well how to listen."

The reindeer bounded with joy, and the robber-maiden lifted Gerda on his back, taking the precaution to bind her on firmly, as well as to give her a little cushion to sit on. "And here," said she, "are your fur boots, which you will need in that cold country. The muff I must keep myself, as it is too pretty to part with; but you shall not be frozen. Here are my mother's huge gloves; they reach up to the elbow; put them on—now your hands look as clumsy as my old mother's!"

And Gerda shed tears of joy. *Cured pig's flesh*

"I cannot bear to see you crying!" said the little robber-maiden, "you ought to look glad. See, here are two loaves and a piece of bacon for you, that you may not be hungry on the way."

*1, 1/2  
Fadder* She fastened this provender also on the reindeer's back, opened the door, called away the great dogs, and the cutting asunder with her dagger the rope which bound the reindeer, shouted to him, "Now then, run! but take good care of the little girl."

And Gerda stretched out her hands to the robber-maiden and bade her farewell; and the reindeer fled through the forest, *the remainder of a tree* over stock and stone, over desert and heath, over meadow and moor. The wolves howled and the ravens shrieked. "Isch! Isch!" a red light flashed—one might have fancied the sky was sneezing.

"Those are my dear old Northern Lights!"

said the reindeer ; “ look at them, how beautiful they are ! ” And he ran faster than ever ; night and day he ran. The loaves were eaten, and so was the bacon—at last they were in Lapland.

*Part the Sixth*

THE LAPLAND WOMAN AND THE FINLAND WOMAN

THEY stopped at a little hut, a wretched hut it was ; the roof very nearly touched the ground, and the door was so low that whoever wished to go either in or out was obliged to crawl upon hands and knees. No one was at home except an old Lapland woman, who was busy boiling fish over a lamp filled with train oil.

The reindeer related to her Gerda's whole history, not, however, till after he had made her acquainted with his own, which appeared to him of much more importance. Poor Gerda, meanwhile, was so overpowered by the cold that she could not speak.

“ Ah, poor thing ! ” said the Lapland woman, “ you have still a long way before you ! You have a hundred miles to run before you can arrive in Finland : the Snow Queen dwells there, and burns blue lights every evening. I will write for you a few words on a piece of dried stock-fish—paper I have none—and you may take it with you to the wise Finland woman who lives there ; she will advise you better than I can.” •

So when Gerda had well warmed herself and taken some food, the Lapland woman wrote a few words on a dried stock-fish, bade Gerda take



care of it, and bound her once more firmly on the reindeer's back.

Onwards they sped ; the wondrous Northern Lights, now of the loveliest, brightest blue colour, shone all through the night, and amidst these splendid illuminations they arrived in Finland, and knocked at the chimney of the wise woman, for door to her house she had none.

It was very hot within—so much so that the wise woman wore scarcely any clothing ; she was low in stature, and very dirty. She immediately loosened little Gerda's dress, took off her fur boots and thick gloves, laid a piece of ice on the reindeer's head, and then read what was written on the stock-fish : she read it three times. After the third reading she knew it by heart, and threw the fish into the porridge-pot, for it might make a very excellent supper, and she never wasted anything.

The reindeer then repeated his own story, and when that was finished he told of little Gerda's adventures ; and the wise woman twinkled her wise eyes, but spoke not a word.

"Thou art so powerful," continued the reindeer, "that I know thou canst twist all the winds of the world into a thread, and if the pilot loosen one knot of it he will have a favourable wind ; if he loosen the second it will blow sharp, and if he loosen the third, so tremendous a storm will arise that the trees of the forest will be uprooted, and the ship wrecked. Wilt thou not mix for this little maiden that wonderful draught which will give her the strength of twelve men, and thus enable her to overcome the Snow Queen ?"

"The strength of twelve men !" repeated the

wise woman, "that would be of much use to be sure!" and she walked away, drew forth a large parchment roll from a shelf and began to read. What strange characters were seen inscribed on the scroll as the wise woman slowly unrolled it! She read so intently that the perspiration ran down her forehead.

But the reindeer pleaded so earnestly for little Gerda, and Gerda's eyes were raised so entreatingly and tearfully, that at last the wise woman's eyes began to twinkle again out of sympathy, and she drew the reindeer into a corner, and, putting a fresh piece of ice upon his head, whispered:

"Little Kay is still with the Snow Queen, in whose abode everything is according to his taste, and therefore he believes it to be the best place in the world. But that is because he has a glass splinter in his heart, and a glass splinter in his eye. Until he has got rid of them he will never feel like a human being, and the Snow Queen will always maintain her influence over him."

"But canst thou not give something to little Gerda whereby she may overcome all these evil influences?"

"I can give her no power so great as that which she already possesses. Seest thou not how strong she is? Seest thou not that both men and animals must serve her—a poor little girl wandering barefoot through the world?"

"Her power is greater than ours; it proceeds from her heart, from her being a loving and innocent child. If this power which she already possesses cannot give her access to the Snow Queen's palace, and enable her to free Kay's eye



and heart from the glass fragment, we can do nothing for her ! Two miles hence is the Snow Queen's garden ; thither thou canst carry the little maiden. Put her down close by the bush bearing red berries and half covered with snow : lose no time, and hasten back to this place ! ”

And the wise woman lifted Gerda on the reindeer's back, and away they went.

“ Oh, I have left my boots behind ! I have left my gloves behind ! ” cried little Gerda, when it was too late. The cold was piercing, but the reindeer dared not stop ; on he ran until he reached the bush with the red berries. Here he set Gerda down, kissed her, the tears rolling down his cheeks the while, and ran fast back again—which was the best thing he could do. And there stood poor Gerda, without shoes, without gloves, alone in that barren region, that ice-cold Finland.

She ran on as fast as she could, and a whole regiment of snow-flakes came to meet her. They did not fall from the sky, which was cloudless and bright with the Northern Lights ; they ran straight along the ground, and the farther Gerda advanced the larger they grew. Gerda then remembered how large and curious the snow-flakes had appeared to her when one day she had looked at them through a burning-glass. These, however, were very much larger ; they were living forms ; they were, in fact, the Snow Queen's guards. Their shapes were the strangest that could be imagined ; some looked like great ugly porcupines, others like snakes rolled into knots with their heads peering forth, and others like little fat bears with bristling hair. All,

however, were alike dazzlingly white—all were living snow-flakes.

Little Gerda began to repeat, "Our Father." Meanwhile, the cold was so intense that she could see her own breath, which, as it escaped her mouth, ascended into the air like vapour. The cold grew intense, the vapour more dense, and at length it took the forms of little bright angels which, as they touched the earth, became larger and more distinct.

They wore helmets on their heads, and carried shields and spears in their hands; their number increased so rapidly that, by the time Gerda had finished her prayer, a whole legion stood around her. They thrust with their spears against the horrible snow-flakes, which fell into thousands of pieces, and little Gerda walked on unhurt and undaunted. The angels touched her hands and feet, and then she scarcely felt the cold, and boldly approached the Snow Queen's palace.

But before we accompany her there, let us see what Kay is doing. He is certainly not thinking of little Gerda, least of all can he imagine that she is now standing at the palace gate.

### *Part the Seventh*

#### THE SNOW QUEEN'S PALACE, AND WHAT CAME TO PASS THERE

THE walls of the palace were formed of the driven snow, its doors and windows of the cutting winds. There were above a hundred halls, the largest of them many miles in extent, all illuminated by

the Northern Lights, all alike vast, empty, icily cold, and dazzlingly white.

No sounds of mirth ever resounded through these dreary spaces ; no cheerful scene refreshed the sight—not even so much as a bear's ball, such as one might imagine sometimes takes place ; the tempest forming a band of musicians, and the polar bears standing on their hind paws and exhibiting themselves in the oddest positions. Nor was there ever a card-party, where the cards might be held in the mouth and dealt out by paws ; nor even a small select coffee-party for the white young lady foxes.

Vast, empty, and cold were the Snow Queen's halls, and the Northern Lights flashed, now high, now low, in regular movement. In the midst of the empty, endless snow saloon lay a frozen lake ; it was broken into a thousand pieces, but these pieces so exactly resembled each other that the breaking of them might well be deemed a work of more than human skill.

The Snow Queen, when at home, always sat in the middle of this lake ; she used to say that she was then sitting on the Mirror of Reason, and that hers was the best, indeed, the only one, in the world.

Little Kay was quite blue, nay, almost black with cold. But he did not observe it, for the Snow Queen had kissed away the shrinking feeling he used to experience ; and his heart was like a lump of ice. He was busied among the sharp-icy fragments, laying and joining them together in every possible way, just as people do with what are called Chinese puzzles.

Kay could form the most curious and complete

figures—this was the ice-puzzle of reason—and in his eyes these figures were of the utmost importance. He often formed whole words, but there was one word he never could succeed in forming—it was Eternity. The Snow Queen had said to him, “When thou canst put that figure together, thou shalt become thine own master, and I will give thee the whole world, and a new pair of skates besides.”

But he could never do it.

“Now I am going to the warm countries,” said the Snow Queen. “I shall flit through the air, and look into the black cauldrons”—she meant the burning mountains, Etna and Vesuvius. “I shall whiten them a little ; that will be good for the citrons and vineyards.”

So away flew the Snow Queen, leaving Kay sitting all alone in the large empty hall of ice. He looked at the fragments, and thought and thought till his head ached. He sat so still and so stiff that one might have fancied that he too was frozen.

Cold and cutting blew the winds when little Gerda passed through the palace gates, but she repeated her evening prayer, and they immediately sank to rest. She entered the large, cold, empty hall : she saw Kay, she recognised him, she flew upon his neck, she held him fast, and cried, “Kay ! dear, dear Kay ! I have found thee at last !”

But he sat still as before, cold, silent, motionless ; his unkindness wounded poor Gerda deeply. Hot and bitter were the tears she shed ; they fell upon his breast ; they reached his heart ; they thawed the ice and dissolved the tiny splinter

of glass within it. He looked at her whilst she sang her hymn—

“ Our roses bloom and fade away,  
Our Infant Lord abides away ;  
May we be blessed His face to see,  
And ever little children be.”

Then Kay burst into tears. He wept till the glass splinter floated in his eye and fell with his tears ; he knew his old companion immediately, and exclaimed with joy, “ Gerda, my dear little Gerda, where hast thou been all this time ? And where have I been ? ” He looked around him. “ How cold it is here ! how wide and empty ! ” and he embraced Gerda, whilst she laughed and wept by turns.

Even the pieces of ice took part in their joy ; they danced about merrily, and when they were wearied and lay down, they formed of their own accord the mystical letters of which the Snow Queen had said that when Kay could put them together he should be his own master, and that she would give him the whole world, with a new pair of skates besides.

And Gerda kissed his cheeks, which then became fresh and glowing as ever ; she kissed his eyes, and they sparkled like her own ; she kissed his hands and feet, and he was once more healthy and merry. The Snow Queen might now come home as soon as she liked—it mattered not ; Kay's charter of freedom stood written on the mirror in bright icy characters.

They took each other by the hand, and wandered forth out of the palace, talking about the

aged grandmother, and the rose-trees on the roof of their houses ; and as they walked on, the winds were hushed into a calm, and the sun burst forth in splendour from among the dark storm-clouds.

When they arrived at the bush with the red berries, they found the reindeer standing by awaiting their arrival. He had brought with him another and younger reindeer, whose udders were full, and who gladly gave her warm milk to refresh the young travellers.

The old reindeer and the young hind now carried Kay and Gerda on their backs, first to the little hot room of the wise woman of Finland, where they warmed themselves, and received advice how to proceed in their journey home ; and afterwards to the abode of the Lapland woman, who made them some new clothes and provided them with a sledge.

The whole party now went on together till they came to the boundary of the country ; but just where the green leaves began to sprout, the Lapland woman and the two reindeers took their leave. " Farewell ! farewell ! " said they all.

Then the first little birds they had seen for many a long day began to chirp, and warble their pretty songs ; and the trees of the forest burst upon them full of rich and variously tinted foliage. Suddenly the green boughs parted asunder, and a spirited horse galloped up.

Gerda knew it well, for it was the one which had been harnessed to her gold coach ; and on it sat a young girl wearing a bright scarlet cap, and with pistols in the holster before her. It was indeed, no other than the robber-maiden, who,



weary of her home in the forest, was going on her travels, first to the north and afterwards to other parts of the world. She at once recognised Gerda, and Gerda had not forgotten her. Most joyful was their greeting.

"A fine gentleman you are, to be sure, you graceless young truant!" said she to Kay. "I should like to know if you deserved that any one should be running to the end of the world on your account!"

But Gerda stroked her cheeks, and asked after the prince and princess.

"They are gone travelling into foreign countries," replied the robber-maiden.

"And the raven?" asked Gerda.

"Ah! the raven is dead," returned she. The tame beloved has become a widow; so she hops about with a piece of wortsed wound round her leg; she moans most piteously, and chatters more than ever! But tell me now all that has happened to you, and how you managed to pick up your old playfellow."

And Gerda and Kay told their story.

"Snip-snap-snurre-bassulerre!" said the robber-maiden. She pressed the hands of both, promised that if she ever passed through their town she would pay them a visit, and then bade them farewell, and rode away out into the wide world.

Kay and Gerda walked on hand in hand, and wherever they went it was spring, beautiful spring, with its bright flowers and green leaves.

They arrived at a large town, the church-bells were ringing merrily, and they immediately recognised the high towers rising into the sky—

it was the town wherein they had lived. Joyfully they passed through the streets, joyfully they stopped at the door of Gerda's grandmother ; they walked up the stairs and entered the well-known room. The clock said " Tick, tick ! " and the hands moved as before.

Only one alteration could they find, and that was in themselves, for they saw that they were now full-grown persons. The rose-trees on the roof blossomed in front of the open window, and there beneath them stood the children's seats.

Kay and Gerda went and sat down upon them, still holding each other by the hands ; the cold, hollow splendour of the Snow Queen's palace they had forgotten—it seemed to them only an unpleasant dream.

The grandmother meanwhile sat amid God's bright sunshine, and read from the Bible these words : " Unless ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

And Kay and Gerda gazed on each other ; they now understood the words of their hymn—

" Our roses bloom and fade away,  
Our Infant Lord abides away ;  
May we be blessed His face to see,  
And ever little children be ! "

There they sat, those two happy ones, grown-up and yet children—children at heart, while all around them glowed bright summer—warm, glorious summer.



## HOLGER THE DANE

"THERE is in Denmark an old castle called Kronborg ; it stands close by the Sound of Elsinore, where every day large ships—English, Russian, and Prussian—may be seen sailing along. And as they pass the old castle, they salute it with their cannon, ' Boom ! ' and the castle answers with its cannon, ' Boom ! ' This is the same as saying, ' Good-day ! ' and ' Thank you ! '

"No ships sail past during the winter, for then the Sound is covered with ice, and becomes a very broad highway leading from Denmark to Sweden. The Danish and Swedish flags flutter overhead, and Danes and Swedes walk and drive to and fro, meet and say to each other ' Good-day ! ' ' Thank you ! ' not with the report of cannon, but with a hearty, friendly shake of the hands. They buy wheaten bread and biscuits of each other, because every one fancies foreign bread the best.

"But the glory of the scene is still the old Kronborg, and beneath, in those great, dark caverns, which no man can approach, sits Holger the Dane. He is clothed in iron and steel ; he rests his head on his sinewy arms ; his long beard hangs over the marble table, into which it seems to have grown fast. There he sleeps and dreams, and in his dreams he sees all that is going on up in Denmark.

"Every Christmas Eve an angel of God comes to him and tells him that he has dreamed truly, and that he may sleep on, for Denmark is in no

danger. But whenever danger shall threaten her, then will Holger the Dane arise in his might, and, as he disengages his beard, the marble table will burst in twain. Then he will come forth and fight in such wise that all the countries of the world shall ring with the fame thereof ! ”

All this about Holger the Dane was told one evening by an old grandfather to his little grandson, and the boy was sure that all that his grandfather said must be true.

Now this old man was a carver, one of those whose employment is to carve the beaks of ships, and, as he sat talking to the little boy, he cut out of wood a large figure intended to represent Holger the Dane. There he was with his long beard, standing so proudly erect, holding in one hand his broad battle-sword, and leaning the other on his Danish coat-of-arms.

And the old grandfather told so many stories about different men and women famed in Danish history, that at last the little boy began to imagine he must know quite as much as Holger the Dane, for he could only dream about these things. After the child had gone to bed, he still thought over what he had heard, and pressed his chin down into the mattress, fancying that he, too, had a long beard, and that it had grown into the bed.

But the old grandfather still sat at his work, carving the Danish coat-of-arms ; and when he had finished it he looked at the whole figure and thought over all that he had heard, and read, and told that evening to the little boy. Then he nodded his head, and wiped his spectacles, and then put them on again, saying, “ Ah, yes, Holger

the Dane will certainly not come in my time ; but the boy in the bed yonder, he, perchance, may see him and stand beside him in the hour of need."

And again the old grandfather nodded his head ; and the more he looked at his Holger the Dane, the more he felt persuaded that this was a very good figure that he had just made. He could almost fancy it had colour, and that the armour shone like real iron and steel ; the hearts on the Danish arms grew redder and redder, and the lions, with their gold crowns, sprang forward fiercely—so it seemed—while he looked at them.

" Surely this is the prettiest coat-of-arms in the world ! " said the old man. " The lions denote strength, and the hearts stand for mildness and love."

He looked on the uppermost lion and thought of King Canute, who subjected proud England to Denmark's throne. He looked at the second lion and then remembered Waldemar, who gathered the Danish states into one, and vanquished the Vends. He looked at the third lion and thought of Margaret, who united the crowns of Denmark, Sweden, and Norway. He looked at the red hearts, and they seemed to shine brighter than ever ; they were changed into moving flames, and his thoughts followed each flame.

The first flame led him into a dark, narrow dungeon, in which sat a captive, a beautiful woman. It was Eleanora Ulfeld, the daughter of Christian the Fourth ; the flame settled upon her bosom, and bloomed like a rose above the heart of that noblest and best of all Danish women.

"Yes, that is one heart in Denmark's standard!" quoth the old grandfather.

And his thoughts followed the second flame, and it led him to the sea, where the cannon roared and the ships lay wrapped in smoke; and the flame rested, like the badge of an order of knighthood, upon Hvitfeldt's breast, just when, to save the fleet, he blew up himself and his ship.

And the third flame led him into Greenland's wretched huts, where the priest, Hans Egede, with love in his words and deeds, and the flame shone like a star upon his breast, pointing to the third heart in the Danish standard.

And the old grandfather's thoughts preceded the fourth flame, for he knew well where that hovering torchlight would lead. In the peasant woman's lonely chamber stood Frederick the Sixth, writing his name with chalk on the rafters; the flame flickered about his bosom, flickered in his heart; it was in that peasant's cot that his heart became a heart for Denmark's arms.

And the old grandfather wiped his eyes, for he had known and served King Frederick of the silver-white hair and kind blue eyes; and he folded his hands and gazed before him in silence. Just then the old man's daughter-in-law came up and reminded him that it was late, and time for him to rest, and that the board was spread for supper.

"But what a beautiful figure you have made, grandfather!" said she. "Holger the Dane, and our old coat-of-arms complete! I fancy I have seen this face before."

"No, that you have not," replied the old man; "but I have seen it, and I have tried to cut it in

wood, just as I remember it. It was on that 2nd of April when the English fleet lay off the coast, when we showed ourselves to be Danes of the true old breed ! I was of Steen Billes's squadron ; I stood on deck of the *Denmark* ; there was a man by my side, and it really seemed that the cannon balls feared and shunned him ! So merrily he sang the fine old battle-songs, and fired and fought as if he were more than mortal.

"I can recall his face even now ; but whence he came, or whither he went, I knew not ; indeed, no one knew. I have often thought it must have been Holger the Dane himself, and that he had swum down from Kronborg to help us in the hour of danger ; that was only my fancy, perhaps—at anyrate, here stands his likeness !"

And the figure cast its huge shadow up the wall, even to the ceiling, and the shadow seemed to move, too, just as if the real living Holger the Dane were actually present in the room ; but this might be because the flame of the candle flickered so unsteadily.

And his son's wife kissed the old grandfather and led him to the large arm-chair at the table, where she and her husband, who, of course, was son to the old grandfather and father to the little boy in bed, sat down to eat their evening meal. And the old grandfather talked the while about the Danish lions and the Danish hearts, and about the strength and gentleness they were meant to typify.

And he showed how there was another kind of strength, quite different from that which lies in the sword ; pointing, as he spoke, to the shelf where a few old, well-read, well-worn books were

lying, among them Holbergs' comedies—those comedies which people take up and read again and again, because they are so charmingly written that all the characters described in them seem as well-known to you as persons you have lived with all your life.

"You see he, too, knew how to carve!" remarked the old man; "he could carve out people's humours and caprices!"

And then the old grandfather nodded at the looking-glass, over which the almanac with the "Round Tower" \* on its cover was stuck, saying, "Tycho Brahe, again, he was one of those who used the sword, not to cut into human flesh and bone, but to make clear a plain highway among all the stars of heaven!"

"And then he, whose father was of my own craft, the old carver's son, he with the white hair and broad shoulders, whom we ourselves have seen, he whose fame is in all countries of the earth! he, to be sure, could sculpture in stone. I can carve only wood. Ah, yes, Holger the Dane comes to us in many different ways, that all the world may hear of Denmark's strength! Now, shall we drink Bertel Thorwaldsen's health?"

But the little boy in bed, all this while, saw distinctly before him the ancient castle of Kronborg, standing alone above the Sound of Elsinore, and the real Holger the Dane sitting in the caverns underground, with his beard grown fast into the marble table, and dreaming of all that happens in the world above him. And Holger the Dane, among other things, dreamed of the narrow, meanly-furnished chamber, wherein sat

\* The astronomical tower in Copenhagen.



the wood-carver ; he heard all that was said there, and bowed his head in his dream, saying—

“ Yes, remember me still, good Danish people ! Bear me in mind ! I will not fail to come in your hour of need ! ”

And the sun shone brightly on Kronborg's towers, and the wind wafted the notes of the hunter's horn across from the neighbour country. The ships sailed past and saluted the castle, “ Boom, boom ! ” and Kronborg returned in answer, “ Boom, boom ! ” But, loud as their cannon roared, Holger the Dane awaked not yet, for they did but mean “ Good-day ! ” and “ Thank you ! ”

The cannon must mean something very different from that before he will awake ; yet awake he will, when there is need, for worth and strength dwell in Holger the Dane !

## TOMMELISE

ONCE upon a time there lived a young wife who longed exceedingly to possess a little child of her own ; so she went to an old witch-woman and said to her, “ I wish so very much to have a child, a little tiny child ; won't you give me one, old mother ? ”

“ Oh, with all my heart ! ” replied the witch. “ Here is a barley-corn for you ; it is not exactly of the same sort as those that grow on the farmer's fields, or that are given to the fowls in the poultry-yard, but do you sow it in a flower-pot, and then you shall see what you shall see ! ”



"Thank you, thank you!" cried the woman, and she gave the witch a silver sixpence, and then, having returned home, sowed the barley-corn as she had been directed; whereupon a large and beautiful flower immediately shot forth from the flower-pot. It looked like a tulip, but the petals were tightly folded up; it was still in bud.

"What a lovely flower!" exclaimed the peasant woman, and she kissed the pretty red and yellow leaves; and, as she kissed them, the flower gave a loud report and opened. It was indeed a tulip, but on the small green point in the centre of the flower there sat a little tiny girl, so pretty and delicate, but her whole body scarcely bigger than the young peasant's thumb. So she called her Tommelise.

A pretty varnished walnut-shell was given her as a cradle, blue violet leaves served as her mattresses, and a rose-leaf was her coverlet; here she slept at night, but in the day-time she played on the table.

The peasant wife had filled a plate with water, and laid flowers in it, their blossoms bordering the edge of the plate, while the stalks lay in the water; on the surface floated a large tulip-leaf, and on it Tommelise might sit and sail from one side of the plate to the other, two white horse hairs having been given her for oars. That looked quite charming! And Tommelise could sing, too, and she sang in such low sweet tones as never were heard before.

One night, while she was lying in her pretty bed, a great ugly toad came hopping in through the broken window-pane. The toad was such a great creature, old and withered-looking, and

wet, too ; she hopped at once down upon the table where Tommelise lay sleeping under the red rose petal.

"That is just the wife for my son," said the toad ; and she seized hold of the walnut-shell, with Tommelise in it, and hopped away with her through the broken pane, down into the garden. Here flowed a broad stream ; its banks were muddy and swampy, and it was amongst this mud that the old toad and her son dwelt. Ugh ! how hideous and deformed he was—just like his mother.

"Coax, coax, brekke-ke-kex !" was all he could find to say on seeing the pretty little maiden in the walnut-shell.

"Don't make such a riot, or you'll wake her !" said old mother toad. "She may easily run away from us, for she is as light as a swan-down feather. I'll tell you what we'll do ; we'll take her out into the brook, and set her down on one of the large water-lily leaves ; it will be like an island to her, who is so light and small. Then she cannot run away from us, and we can go and get ready the state-rooms down under the mud, where you and she are to dwell together."

Out in the brook there grew many water-lilies, with their broad green leaves, each of which seemed to be floating over the water. The leaf which was the farthest from the shore was also the largest ; to it swam old mother toad, and on it she set the walnut-shell, with Tommelise.

The poor little tiny creature awoke quite early next morning, and, when she saw where she was, she began to weep most bitterly, for there was

nothing but water on all sides of the large green leaf, and she could in no way reach the land.

Old mother toad was down in the mud, decorating her apartments with bulrushes and yellow buttercups, so as to make it quite gay and tidy to receive her new daughter-in-law. At last, she and her frightful son swam together to the leaf where she had left Tommelise ; they wanted to fetch her pretty cradle, and place it for her in the bridal chamber before she herself was conducted into it. Old mother toad bowed low in the water, and said to her, " Here is my son, he is to be thy husband, and you will dwell together so comfortably down in the mud ! "

" Coax, coax, brekke-ke-kex ! " was all that her son could say.

Then they took the neat little bed and swam away with it, whilst Tommelise sat alone on the green leaf, weeping, for she did not like the thought of living with the withered old toad, and having her ugly son for a husband.

The little fishes that were swimming to and fro in the water beneath had heard what mother toad had said ; so now they put up their heads—they wanted to see the little maid. And when they saw her, they were charmed with her delicate beauty, and it vexed them very much that the hideous old toad should carry her off. No, that should never be ! They surrounded the green stalk in the water, on which rested the water-lily leaf, and gnawed it asunder with their teeth, and then the leaf floated away down the brook, with Tommelise on it ; away, far away, where the old toad could not follow.

Tommelise sailed past so many places, and the

wild birds among the bushes saw her, and sang, "Oh, what a sweet little maiden!" On and on, farther and farther, floated the leaf: Tommelise was on her travels.

A pretty little white butterfly kept fluttering round and round her, and at last settled down on the leaf, for he loved Tommelise very much, and she was so pleased. There was nothing to trouble her now that she had no fear of the old toad pursuing her, and wherever she sailed everything was so beautiful, for the sun shone down on the water, making it bright as liquid gold. And now she took off her sash, and tied one end of it round the butterfly, fastening the other end firmly into the leaf. On floated the leaf, faster and faster, and Tommelise with it.

Presently a great cock-chaffer came buzzing past; he caught sight of her, and immediately fastening his claw round her slender waist, flew up into a tree with her. But the green leaf still floated down the brook, and the butterfly with it; he was bound to the leaf and could not get loose.

Oh, how terrified was poor Tommelise when the cock-chaffer carried her up into the tree, and how sorry she felt, too, for the darling white butterfly which she had left tied fast to the leaf; she feared that if he could not get away, he would perish of hunger.

But the cock-chaffer cared nothing for that. He settled with her upon the largest leaf in the tree, gave her some honey from the flowers to eat, and hummed her praises, telling her she was very pretty, although she was not at all like a hen-chaffer. And by and by all the chafers who

lived in that tree came to pay her a visit ; they looked at Tommelise, and one Miss Hen-chafer drew in her feelers, saying, " She has only two legs, how miserable that looks ! " " She has no feelers," cried another. " And see how thin and lean her waist is, why, she is just like a human being ! " observed a third. " How very, very ugly she is ! " at last cried all the lady-chafers in chorus.

The chafer who had carried off Tommelise still could not persuade himself that she was otherwise than pretty, but, as all the rest kept repeating and insisting that she was ugly, he at last began to think they must be in the right, and determined to have nothing more to do with her ; she might go wherever she would, for aught he cared, he said. And so the whole swarm flew down from the tree with her, and set her on a daisy. Then she wept because she was so ugly that the lady-chafers would not keep company with her, and yet Tommelise was the prettiest little creature that could be imagined, soft and delicate and transparent as the loveliest rose-leaf.

All the summer long poor Tommelise lived alone in the wide wood. She wove herself a bed of grass-straw, and hung it under a large burdock-leaf which sheltered her from the rain ; she dined off the honey from the flowers, and drank from the dew that every morning spangled the leaves and herblets around her.

Thus passed the summer and autumn, but then came winter, the cold, long winter. All the birds who had sung so sweetly to her flew away, trees and flowers withered, the large burdock-leaf

under which Tommelise had lived, rolled itself up, and became a dry, yellow stalk, and Tommelise was fearfully cold, for her clothes were wearing out, and she herself was so slight and frail, poor little thing, she was nearly frozen to death. It began to snow, and every light flake that fell upon her made her feel as we should if a whole shovelful of snow were thrown upon us, for we are giants in comparison with a little creature only an inch long. She wrapped herself up in a withered leaf, but it gave her no warmth ; she shuddered with cold.

Close outside the wood on the skirt of which Tommelise had been living, lay a large corn-field, but the corn had been carried away long ago, leaving only the dry, naked stubble standing up from the hard-frozen earth. It was like another wood to Tommelise, and oh, how she shivered with cold as she made her way through.

At last she came past the field-mouse's door ; for the field-mouse had made herself a little hole under the stubble, and there she dwelt snugly and comfortably, having a room full of corn, and a neat kitchen and store-chamber besides. And poor Tommelise must now play the beggar-girl ; she stood at the door and begged for a little piece of a barley-corn, for she had had nothing to eat during two whole days.

"Thou poor little thing !" said the field-mouse, who was, indeed, a thoroughly good-natured old creature, "come into my warm room and dine with me."

And as she soon took a great liking to Tommelise, she proposed to her to stay. "You may dwell with me all the winter if you will, but keep



my room clean and neat, and tell me stories, for I love stories dearly."

And Tommelise did all that the kind old field-mouse required of her, and was made very comfortable in her new abode.

"We shall have a visitor presently," observed the field-mouse; "my next-door neighbour comes to see me once every week. He is better off than I am; has large rooms in his house, and wears a coat of such beautiful black velvet. It would be a capital thing for you if you could secure him for your husband, but, unfortunately, he is blind, he cannot see you. You must tell him the prettiest stories you know."

But Tommelise did not care at all about pleasing their neighbour Mr. Mole, nor did she wish to marry him. He came and paid a visit in his black-velvet suit, he was so rich and so learned, and the field-mouse declared his domestic offices were twenty times larger than hers; but the sun and the pretty flowers he could not endure, he was always abusing them, though he had never seen either. Tommelise was called upon to sing for his amusement, and by the time she had sung "Lady-bird, lady-bird, fly away home!" and "The Friar of Orders Grey," the mole had quite fallen in love with her through the charm of her sweet voice; however, he said nothing, he was such a prudent, cautious animal.

He had just been digging a long passage through the earth from their house to his, and he now gave permission to the field-mouse and Tommelise to walk in it as often as they liked. However, he bade them not to be afraid of the dead bird that lay in the passage; it was a whole



bird, with beak and feathers entire, and, therefore, he supposed it must have died quite lately, at the beginning of the winter, and had been buried just in the place where he had dug his passage.

The mole took a piece of tinder, which shines like fire in the dark, in his mouth, and went on first to light his friends through the long dark passage ; and when they came to the place where the dead bird lay, he thrust his broad nose up against the ceiling and pushed up the earth, so as to make a great hole for the light to come through. In the midst of the floor lay a swallow, his wings clinging firmly to his sides, his head and legs drawn under the feathers ; the poor bird had evidently died of cold.

Tommelise felt so very sorry, for she loved all the little birds who had sung and chirped so merrily to her the whole summer long ; but the mole kicked it with his short legs, saying, " Here's a fine end to all its whistling ! a miserable thing it must be to be born a bird. None of my children will be birds, that's a comfort ! Such creatures have nothing but their ' quivit,' and must be starved to death in the winter."

" Yes, indeed, a sensible animal like you may well say so," returned the field-mouse ; " what has the bird got by all his chirping and chirruping ? When winter comes it must starve and freeze ; and it is such a great creature, too !"

Tommelise said nothing, but, when the two others had turned their backs upon the bird, she bent over it, smoothed down the feathers that covered its head, and kissed the closed eyes. " Perhaps it was this one that sang so delightfully

to me in the summer-time," thought she ; " how much pleasure it has given me, the dear, dear bird ! "

The mole now stopped up the hole through which the daylight had pierced, and then followed the ladies home. But Tommelise could not sleep that night ; so she got out of her bed, and wove a carpet out of hay, and then went out and spread it round the dead bird ; she also fetched some soft cotton from the field-mouse's room, which she laid over the bird, that it might be warm amid the cold earth.

" Farewell, thou dear bird," said she ; " farewell, and thanks for thy beautiful song in the summer-time, when all the trees were green, and the sun shone so warmly upon us ! " And she pressed her head against the bird's breast, but was terrified to feel something beating within it. It was the bird's heart, the bird was not dead ; it had lain in a swoon, and now that it was warmer its life returned.

Every autumn all the swallows fly away to warm countries ; but if one of them lingers behind, it freezes and falls down as if dead, and the cold snow covers it.

Tommelise trembled with fright, for the bird was very large compared with her, who was only an inch in length. However, she took courage, laid the cotton more closely round the poor swallow, and, fetching a leaf which had served herself as a coverlet, spread it over the bird's head.

The next night she stole out again, and found that the bird's life had quite returned, though it was so feeble that only for one short moment

could it open its eyes to look at Tommelise, who stood by with a piece of tinder in her hand—she had no other lantern.

“Thanks to thee, thou sweet little child !” said the sick swallow. “I feel delightfully warm now ; soon I shall recover my strength, and be able to fly again, out in the warm sunshine.”

“Oh, no,” she replied, “it is too cold without ; it snows and freezes ! Thou must stay in thy warm bed ; I will take care of thee.”

She brought the swallow water in a flower-petal and he drank ; and then he told her how he had torn one of his wings in a thorn bush, and therefore could not fly fast enough to keep up with the other swallows, who were all migrating to the warm countries. He had at last fallen to the earth, and more than that he could not remember ; he did not at all know how he had got underground.

However, underground he remained all the winter long, and Tommelise was kind to him, and loved him dearly. But she never said a word about him either to the mole or to the field-mouse, for she knew they could not endure the poor swallow.

As soon as the spring came, and the sun's warmth had penetrated the earth, the swallow said farewell to Tommelise, and she opened for him the covering of earth which the mole had thrown back before. The sun shone upon them deliciously, and the swallow asked whether she would not go with him ; she might sit upon his back, and then they would fly together far out into the green-wood. But Tommelise knew it would vex the old field-mouse if she were to leave her.

"No, I cannot, I must not go," said Tommelise.

"Fare thee well, then, thou good and pretty maiden," said the swallow, and away he flew into the sunshine. Tommelise looked after him and the tears came into her eyes, for she loved the poor swallow so much.

"Quivit, quivit," sang the bird, as he flew into the greenwood. And Tommelise was now sad indeed. She was not allowed to go out into the warm sunshine; the wheat that had been sown in the field above the field-mouse's house grew up so high that it seemed a perfect forest to the poor little damsel, who was only an inch in length.

"This summer you must work at getting your wedding clothes ready," said the field-mouse; for their neighbour, the blind dull mole in the black-velvet suit, had now made his proposals in form to Tommelise. "You shall have worsted and linen in plenty; you shall be well provided with all manner of clothes and furniture before you become the mole's wife."

So Tommelise was obliged to work hard at the distaff, and the field-mouse hired four spiders to spin and weave night and day. Every evening came the mole, and always began to talk about the summer soon coming to an end, and that then, when the sun would no longer shine so warmly, scorching the earth till it was as dry as a stone, yes, then, his nuptials with Tommelise should take place.

But this sort of conversation did not please her at all; she was thoroughly wearied of his dullness and his prating. Every morning when the sun

rose, and every evening when it set, she used to steal out at the door ; and when the wind blew the tops of the corn aside, so that she could see the blue sky through the opening, she thought how bright and beautiful it was out here, and wished most fervently to see the dear swallow once more ; but he never came, and must have been flying far away in the beautiful greenwood.

Autumn came, and Tommelise's wedding clothes were ready.

"Four weeks more, and you shall be married !" said the field-mouse.

But Tommelise wept, and said she would not marry the dull mole.

"Fiddlestick !" exclaimed the field-mouse. "Don't be obstinate, child, or I shall bite thee with my white teeth ! Is he not handsome, pray ? Why, the Queen has not got such a black-velvet dress as he wears ! And isn't he rich—rich both in kitchens and cellars ? Be thankful to get such a husband !"

So Tommelise must be married. The day fixed had arrived ; the mole had already come to fetch his bride, and she must dwell with him, deep under the earth, never again to come out into the warm sunshine which she loved so much, and which he could not endure. The poor child was in despair at the thought that she must now bid farewell to the beautiful sun, of which she had at least been allowed to catch a glimpse every now and then while she lived with the field-mouse.

"Farewell, thou glorious sun !" she cried, throwing her arms up into the air, and she walked on a little way beyond the field-mouse's

door. The corn was already reaped, and only the dry stubble surrounded her. "Farewell, farewell!" repeated she, as she clasped her tiny arms round a little red flower that grew there. "Greet the dear swallow from me, if thou shouldst see him."

"Quivit! quivit!"—There was a fluttering of wings just over her head; she looked up, and behold! the little swallow was flying past. And how pleased he was when he perceived Tommelise! She told how that she had been obliged to accept the disagreeable mole as a husband, and that she would have to dwell deep underground where the sun never pierced. And she could not help weeping as she spoke.

"The cold winter will soon be here," said the swallow; "I shall fly far away to the warm countries. Wilt thou go with me? Thou canst sit on my back, and tie thyself firmly to me with thy sash, and thus we shall fly away from the stupid mole and his dark room, far away over the mountains to those countries where the sun shines so brightly, where it is always summer, and flowers blossom all the year round. Come and fly with me, thou sweet little Tommelise, who didst save my life when I lay frozen in the dark cellars of the earth!"

"Yes, I will go with thee!" said Tommelise. And she seated herself on the bird's back, her feet resting on the outspread wings, and tied her girdle firmly round one of the strongest feathers; and then the swallow soared high into the air, and flew away over forest and over lake, over mountains whose crests are covered with snow all the year round. How Tommelise shivered as she



breathed the keen frosty air ! However, she soon crept down under the bird's warm feathers, her head still peering forth, eager to behold all the glory and beauty beneath her.

At last they reached the warm countries. There the sun shone far more brightly than in her native clime. The heavens seemed twice as high, and twice as blue ; and ranged along the sloping hills grew, in rich luxuriance, the loveliest green and purple grapes. Citrons and melons were seen in the groves, the fragrance of myrtles and balsams filled the air, and by the wayside gambolled groups of pretty merry children, chasing large bright-winged butterflies.

But the swallow did not rest here ; still he flew on ; and still the scene seemed to grow more and more beautiful. Near a calm, blue lake, overhung by lofty trees, stood a half-ruined palace of white marble, built in times long past. Vine-wreaths trailed up the long slender pillars, and on the capitals, among the green leaves and waving tendrils, many a swallow had built his nest, and one of these nests belonged to the swallow on whose back Tommelise was riding.

"This is my house," said the swallow, "but if thou wouldst rather choose for thyself one of the splendid flowers growing beneath us, I will take thee there, and thou shalt make thy home in the loveliest of them all."

"That will be charming !" exclaimed she, clapping her tiny hands.

On the green turf beneath there lay the fragments of a white marble column which had fallen to the ground, and around these fragments twined some beautiful large white flowers. The



swallow flew down with Tommelise, and set her on one of the broad petals.

But what was her surprise when she saw sitting in the very heart of the flower a little mannikin, fair and transparent as though he were made of glass ! He wore the prettiest gold crown on his head, and the brightest, most delicate wings on his shoulders, yet was scarcely one whit larger than Tommelise herself.

He was the spirit of the flower. In every blossom there dwelt one such fairy youth or maiden, but this one was the king of all these flower-spirits.

" Oh, how handsome he is, this king ! " whispered Tommelise to the swallow. The fairy prince was quite startled at the sudden descent of the swallow, who was a sort of giant compared with him ; but when he saw Tommelise he was delighted, for she was the very loveliest maiden he had ever seen. So he took his gold crown off his own head and set it upon hers, asked her name, and whether she would be his bride, and reign as queen over all the flower-spirits.

This, you see, was quite a different bridegroom from the son of the ugly old toad, or the blind mole with his black-velvet coat. So Tommelise replied " Yes " to the beautiful prince, and then the lady and gentlemen fairies came out, each from a separate flower, to pay their homage to Tommelise. Gracefully and courteously they paid their homage, and every one of them brought her a present.

But the best of all the presents was a pair of transparent wings ; they were fastened on Tommelise's shoulders, and enabled her to fly from

flower to flower. That was the greatest of pleasures ; and the little swallow sat in his nest above and sang to her his sweetest song ; in his heart, however, he was very sad, for he loved Tommelise, and would have wished never to part from her.

"Thou shalt no longer be called Tommelise," said the king of flowers to her, "for it is not a pretty name, and thou art so lovely ! We will call thee Maia."

"Farewell ! farewell !" sang the swallow, and away he flew from the warm countries, far away back to Denmark. There he had a little nest just over the window of the man who writes stories for children. "Quivit, quivit, quivit !" he sang to him, and from him we have learned this history.

## LITTLE TUK

A DROLL name, to be sure, is Tuk. However, it was not the little boy's real name : his real name was Carl, but when he was so young he could hardly speak, he used to call himself Tuk ; why, it would be difficult to say, for Tuk is not at all like Carl. However, the boy was still called Little Tuk by all who knew him.

Little Tuk had to take care of his sister Gustava, who was smaller even than himself, and he had also to learn his lesson ; here were two things to be done, and the difficulty was how to do them both at once.

The poor boy sat with his little sister in his lap,

singing to her all the pretty songs he knew, yet every now and then casting a sidelong glance at his geography book, which lay open beside him. By to-morrow morning he must not be able only to repeat without book the names of all the towns in the diocese of Zealand, but to tell about them all that could be told.

At last his mother came home, and took little Gustava. Tuk then ran to the window, and read and read till he had nearly read his eyes out, for it was growing darker every minute, and his mother could not afford to buy candles.

"There goes the old washerwoman home through the street," said the mother, looking out of the window; "she can hardly carry herself, poor thing, and she has the weight of that great heavy pail of water from the pump to bear besides. Jump up, like a good boy, Little Tuk, go and help the poor old creature." And Little Tuk immediately jumped up, and ran to help her.

When he came back, it was quite dark; it was of no use to wish for a candle, he must go to bed. There he lay, still thinking of his geography lesson, of the diocese of Zealand, and all that his master had told him. It should have been all read over again by rights, but that he could not do now. His geography book he put under his pillow, for somebody had told him that would help him wonderfully to remember his lesson. However, he had never yet found that this sort of help was at all to be depended upon.

So there he lay, thinking and thinking, till all at once he felt as though some one were gently sealing his eyes and mouth with a kiss. He slept, and yet he slept not, for he seemed to see the old

washerwoman's mild eyes fixed upon him, and to hear her say—

"It would be a sin and a shame, Little Tuk, if you were not to know your lesson. You helped me, now I will help you, and then our Lord will help us both."

And then the leaves of the book under Little Tuk's head began to rustle, and to turn over and over.

"Cluck, cluck, cluck!" cried a hen—she came from the town of Kiöge.

"I am a Kiöge hen," said she; and she told Little Tuk how many inhabitants the town contained, and about the battle that had once been fought there, and how it was now a place of no consequence at all.

"Kribbley krabbley, kribbley krabbley!"—and here a great wooden bird bounced down upon the bed; it was the popinjay from the shooting-ground at Prestoe. It declared that there were as many inhabitants in Prestoe as it had nails in its body: it was a proud bird. "Thorwaldsen lived in one corner of Prestoe. Am not I a pretty bird—a merry popinjay?"

And now Little Tuk no longer lay in bed; he was on horseback—on he went, gallop, gallop! A magnificently-clad knight—a knight of the olden time—wearing a bright helmet and a waving plume, held him on his own horse, and on they rode together, through the wood to the ancient city of Vordingborg; and it was once again full of life and bustle as in the days of yore.

The high towers of the King's castle rose up against the sky, and bright lights were seen gleaming through the windows. Within were

song, and dance, and merriment ; King Waldemar was leading out the noble young ladies of his court to tread stately measures with him.

Suddenly the morning dawned, the lamps grew pale, the sun rose, and the outlines of the buildings gradually faded away ; one high form after another seemed blotted out of the clear morning sky, till at last one tower alone remained to mark the spot where that royal castle had stood. And the vast city had shrunk up into a poor, mean-looking little town, and the schoolboys came out of school, their books under their arms, and they said, " Two thousand inhabitants " ; but that was not true, there were not nearly so many.

And Little Tuk lay in his bed again ; he knew not whether he had been dreaming or not. Again there was somebody close by his side.

" Little Tuk, Little Tuk ! " cried a voice ; it was the voice of a young sailor-boy.

" I come to salute you from Corsöer. Corsöer is a new town—a living town ; it has steamships and stage-coaches of its own ; once people used to call it a low, vulgar place, but that is an old, worn-out prejudice."

" I dwell by the seaside," says Corsöer ; " I have broad high-roads, and pleasure-gardens ; and I have given birth to a poet, a very amusing one, too, which is more than all poets are. I once thought of sending a ship all round the world ; I did not send it, but I might just as well have done so—and I dwell so pleasantly, close by the port. The loveliest roses are blossoming round about me ! "

And Little Tuk could see the roses ; their soft, blushing red petals, and their fresh green leaves

gleamed before his eyes, but in a moment the flowers had vanished, and the green leaves spread and thickened; a perfect grove had grown up above the bright waters of the fiord, and above the grove towered the two high-pointed steeples of a glorious old church. From the grass-grown side of the hills gushed forth, as in clear rainbow-hued streams of light, a fountain; a merry, musical voice it had, and close beside it sat a king, wearing a gold crown upon his long dark hair.

This was King Hroar sitting by the fountain, and hard by was the town now called Roeskilde (Hroar's Fountain). And beyond the hill, on a broad highway, advanced all Denmark's kings and queens, all wearing their gold crowns; hand in hand they passed on into the church, and the organ's deep tones mingled with the clear rippling of the fountains. And Little Tuk saw and heard it all.

All at once this scene, too, had vanished! What had become of it? It was just like turning over the leaves of a book. Now he saw an old woman; she was a weeder; she came from Soroe, where grass grows in the very market-place. Her grey linen apron was thrown over head and back; the apron was wet—it must have been raining.

"Yes, so it has," said she; and then she began to repeat something very funny out of Holberg's comedies; nor were they all she knew—she could recite old ballads about Waldemar and Absalon. But all of a sudden she shrunk up together, and rocked her head just as if she were going to jump.



“Croak,” said she, “it is wet—it is wet ; it is still as the grave in Soroe !” She had become a frog. “Croak !” and again she was an old woman. “One must dress to suit the weather,” says she ; “it is wet—it is wet ; my town is like a flask—one goes into it through the cork, and through the cork one must get out again. But I have healthy, rosy-cheeked boys at the bottom of the flask ; there they learn wisdom—Greek, Greek ! Croak, croak, croak !”

Her voice was like frog music, or like the noise one makes in walking through a marsh in great boots : always the same tone, so monotonous, so dull, that Little Tuk fell into a sound sleep, and a very good thing it was for him.

But even in his sleep a dream visited him ; his little sister Gustava, with her blue eyes and curling flaxen hair, had, it seemed, all at once grown up into a beautiful girl ; and, though she had no wings, she could fly, and they flew together over all Zealand—over its green woods and blue waters.

“Listen to the cock crowing, Little Tuk ! Cock-a-doodle-doo !—look at the hens scraping away in the town of Kiöge ! There thou shalt have such a famous poultry-yard ; thou shalt no longer suffer hunger and want ; thou shalt shoot at the popinjay, and reach the mark ; thou shalt be a rich and happy man ; thy house shall rise as proudly as King Waldemar’s castle at Vordingborg, and shall be decked so splendidly with marble statues, like those that Thorwaldsen sculptured at Prestoe. Thy good name shall be borne round the world like the ship which should have gone out from Corsöer, and in the town of



Roeskilde thou shalt speak and give counsel, wisely and well, like King Hroar—and then at last, Little Tuk, when thou shalt lie in thy peaceful grave, thou shalt sleep as quietly——”

“As if I lay sleeping in Soroe!” said little Tuk, and hereupon he awoke. It was bright morning, and he remembered nothing of all his dreams; they were to him as if they had never been.

He jumped out of bed and sought for his book; he knew the names of all the towns in his lesson perfectly well. And the old washerwoman put her head in at the door, and nodded to him, saying:—

“Thanks for yesterday’s help, thou dear, sweet child! May the angels bring thy best dream to pass!”

But Little Tuk had forgotten what he had dreamt—it mattered not, though; the angels knew it.

## THE SHEPHERDESS AND THE CHIMNEY-SWEEPER

HAVE you ever seen an old-fashioned oaken-wood cabinet, quite black with age and covered with varnish and carving-work?

Just such a piece of furniture, an old heirloom that had been the property of its present mistress's great-grandmother, once stood in a parlour. It was carved from top to bottom—roses, tulips, and little stags' heads with long branching antlers, peering forth from the curious scrolls and foliage surrounding them. Moreover, in the centre panel of the cabinet was carved the full-length figure of a man, who seemed to be perpetually grinning, perhaps at himself, for in truth he was a most ridiculous figure; he had crooked legs, small horns on his forehead, and a long beard.

The children of the house used to call him "the crooked-legged Field-Marshal-Major-General-Corporal-Sergeant," for this was a long, hard name, and not many figures, whether carved in wood or in stone, could boast of such a title.

There he stood, his eyes always fixed upon the table under the pier-glass, for on this table stood a pretty little porcelain shepherdess, her mantle gathered gracefully round her, and fastened with a red rose; her shoes and hat were gilt; her hand held a crook. Oh, she was charming!

Close by her stood a little chimney-sweeper, likewise of porcelain. He was as clean and neat

as any of the other figures ; indeed, the manufacturer might just as well have made a prince as a chimney-sweeper of him, for though elsewhere black as coal, his face was as fresh and rosy as a girl's, which certainly was a mistake ; it ought to have been black. His ladder in his hand, there he kept his station, close by the little shepherdess. They had been placed together from the first, had always remained on the same spot and had thus plighted their troth to each other ; they suited each other so well ; they were both young people, both of the same kind of porcelain, both alike fragile and delicate.

Not far off stood a figure three times as large as the others. It was an old Chinese mandarin who could nod his head ; he too was of porcelain, and declared that he was grandfather to the little shepherdess. He could not prove his assertion ; however, he insisted that he had authority over her, and so, when the crooked-legged Field-Marshal-Major-General-Corporal-Sergeant made proposals to the little shepherdess, he nodded his head in token of his consent.

"Now, you will have a husband," said the old mandarin to her, "a husband who, I verily believe, is of mahogany-wood ; you will be the wife of a Field-Marshal-Major-General-Corporal-Sergeant, of a man who has a whole cabinet full of silver-plate, besides a store of no one knows what in the secret drawers !"

"I will not go into that dismal cabinet !" declared the little shepherdess. "I have heard say that eleven porcelain ladies are already imprisoned there."

"Then you shall be the twelfth, and you will

be in good company ! ” rejoined the mandarin. “ This very night, when the old cabinet creaks, your nuptials shall be celebrated, as sure as I am a Chinese mandarin ! ”

Whereupon he nodded his head and fell asleep.

But the little shepherdess wept, and turned to the beloved of her heart, the porcelain chimney-sweeper.

“ I believe I must ask you,” said she, “ to go out with me into the wide world, for here we cannot stay.”

“ I will do everything you wish,” replied the little chimney-sweeper ; “ let us go at once. I think I can support you by my profession.”

“ If you could but get off the table ! ” sighed she. “ I shall never be happy till we are away, out in the wide world.”

And he comforted her, and showed her how to set her little foot on the carved edges and gilded foliage twining round the leg of the table, till at last they reached the floor. But turning to look at the old cabinet, they saw everything in a grand commotion ; all the carved stags putting their little heads farther out, raising their antlers, and moving their throats, whilst the crooked-legged-Field-Marshal-Major-General-Corporal-Sergeant sprang up, and shouted out to the old Chinese mandarin, “ Look, they are eloping ! they are eloping ! ” They were not a little frightened, and quickly jumped into an open drawer for protection.

In this drawer there were three or four incomplete packs of cards, and also a little puppet-theatre ; a play was being performed, and all the queens, whether of diamonds, hearts, clubs, or

spades, sat in the front row fanning themselves with the flowers they held in their hands. Behind them stood the knaves, showing that they had each two heads, one above and one below, as most cards have. The play was about two persons who were crossed in love, and the shepherdess wept over it, for it was just like her own history.

"I cannot bear this!" said she. "Let us leave the drawer." But when they had again reached the floor, on looking up at the table they saw that the old Chinese mandarin had awakened, and was rocking his whole body to and fro with rage.

"Oh, the old mandarin is coming!" cried the little shepherdess, and down she fell on her porcelain knees in her greatest distress.

"A sudden thought has struck me," said the chimney-sweeper. "Suppose we creep into the large pot-pourri vase that stands in the corner; there we can rest upon roses and lavender, and throw salt in his eyes if he come near us."

"That will not do at all," said she; "besides, I know that the old mandarin was once betrothed to the pot-pourri vase, and no doubt there is still some slight friendship existing between them. No, there is no help for it, we must wander forth together into the wide world."

"Hast thou indeed the courage to go with me into the wide world?" asked the chimney-sweeper. "Hast thou considered how large it is, and that we may never return home again?"

"I have," replied she.

And the chimney-sweeper looked keenly at her, and then said, "My path leads through the chimney! Hast thou, indeed, the courage to

creep with me through the stove, through the flues and the tunnel? Well do I know the way! We shall mount up so high that they cannot come near us, and at the top there is a cavern that leads into the wide world."

And he led her to the door of the stove.

"Oh, how black it looks!" sighed she; however, she went on with him, through the flues and through the tunnel, where it was dark, pitch dark.

"Now we are in the chimney," said he; "and look, what a lovely star shines above us!"

And there was actually a star in the sky, shining right down upon them, as if to show them the way. And they crawled and crept—a fearful path was theirs—so high, so very high! But he guided and supported her, and showed her the best places whereon to plant her tiny porcelain feet, till they reached the edge of the chimney, where they sat down to rest, for they were very tired, and, indeed, not without reason.

Heaven with all its stars was above them, and the town with all its roofs lay beneath them; the wide, wide world surrounded them. The poor shepherdess had never imagined all this; she leaned her little head on her chimney-sweeper's arm, and wept so vehemently that the gilding broke off from her waistband.

"This is too much!" exclaimed she. "This can I not endure! The world is all too large! Oh, that I was once more upon the little table under the pier-glass! I shall never be happy till I am there again. I have followed thee out into the wide world; surely thou canst follow me home again, if thou lovest me!"



And the chimney-sweeper talked very sensibly to her, reminding her of the old Chinese mandarin and the crooked-legged Field-Marshal-Major-General-Corporal-Sergeant. But she wept so bitterly, and kissed her little chimney-sweeper so fondly, that at last he could not but yield to her request, unreasonable as it was.

So with great difficulty they crawled down the chimney, crept through the flues and the tunnel, and at length found themselves once more in the dark stove ; but they still lurked behind the door, listening, before they would venture to return into the room.

Everything was quite still, and they peeped out. Alas ! on the ground lay the old Chinese mandarin. In attempting to follow the runaways, he had fallen down off the table and had broken into three pieces ; his head lay shaking in a corner. The crooked-legged Field-Marshal-Major-General-Corporal-Sergeant stood where he had always stood, thinking over what had happened.

"Oh, how shocking !" exclaimed the little shepherdess, "old grandfather is broken in pieces, and we are the cause ! I shall never survive it !" and she wrung her delicate hands.

"He can be put together again," replied the chimney-sweeper. "He can very easily be put together ; only be not so impatient ! If they glue his back together, and put a strong rivet in his neck, then he will be as good as new again, and will be able to say plenty of unpleasant things to us."

"Do you really think so ?" asked she. And then they climbed up the table to the place where they had stood before.



"See how far we have been!" observed the chimney-sweeper; "we might have spared ourselves all the trouble."

"If we could but have old grandfather put together!" said the shepherdess. "Will it cost very much?"

And he was put together; the family had his back glued and his neck riveted; he was as good as new, but could no longer nod his head.

"You have certainly grown very proud since you broke in pieces!" remarked the crooked-legged Field-Marshal-Major-General-Corporal-Sergeant; "but I must say, for my part, I do not see that there is anything to be proud of. Am I to have her or am I not? Just answer me that!"

And the chimney-sweeper and the little shepherdess looked imploringly at the old mandarin. They were so afraid lest he should nod his head, but nod he could not; and it was disagreeable to him to tell a stranger that he had a rivet in his neck. So the young porcelain people always remained together; they blessed the grandfather's rivet, and loved each other till they broke in pieces.

## THE TINDER BOX

A SOLDIER was marching along the high-road—right, left ! right, left ! He had his knapsack on his back and a sword by his side, for he had been to the wars, and was now returning home. And on the road he met an old witch, a horrid-looking creature she was ; her lower lip hung down almost to her neck.

“ Good-evening, soldier ! ” said she. “ What a bright sword, and what a large knapsack you have, my fine fellow ! I’ll tell you what ; you shall have as much money for your own as you can wish ! ”

“ Thanks, old witch ! ” cried the soldier.

“ Do you see yonder large tree ? ” said the witch, pointing to a tree that stood close by the wayside. “ It is quite hollow within. Climb up to the top, and you will find a hole large enough for you to creep through, and thus you will get down into the tree. I will tie a rope round your waist, so that I can pull you up again when you call me.”

“ But what am I to do down in the tree ? ” asked the soldier.

“ What are you to do ? ” repeated the witch. “ Why, fetch money, to be sure ! As soon as you get to the bottom, you will find yourself in a wide passage ; it is quite light, more than a hundred lamps are burning there. Then you will see three doors ; you can open them, the keys are in the locks.

“ On opening the first door you will enter a

room. In the midst of it, on the floor, lies a large chest ; a dog is seated on it, his eyes are as large as tea-cups ; but never you mind, don't trouble yourself about him ! I will lend you my blue apron ; you must spread it out on the floor, then go briskly up to the dog, seize him, and set him down on it ; and after that is done, you can open the chest, and take as much money out of it as you please.

" That chest contains none but copper coins ; but if you like silver better, you have only to go into the next room ; there you will find a dog with eyes as large as mill-wheels, but don't be afraid of him ; you have only to set him down on my apron, and then rifle the chest at your leisure.

" But if you would rather have gold than either silver or copper, that is to be had, too, and as much of it as you can carry, if you pass on into the third chamber. The dog that sits on this third money-chest has two eyes, each as large as the round tower. A famous creature he is, as you may fancy ; but don't be alarmed, just set him down on my apron, and then he will do you no harm, and you can take as much golden treasure from the chest as you like."

" Not a bad plan that, upon my word ! " said the soldier. " But how much of the money am I to give you, old woman ? For you'll want your full share of the plunder, I've a notion ! "

" Not a penny will I have," returned the witch. " The only thing I want you to bring me is an old tinder-box which my grandmother left there by mistake last time she was down in the tree."

"Well, then, give me the rope to tie round my waist, and I'll be gone," said the soldier.

"Here it is," said the witch ; "and here is my blue apron."

So the soldier climbed the tree, let himself down through the hole in the trunk, and suddenly found himself in the wide passage, lighted up by many hundred lamps, as the witch had described.

He opened the first door. Bravo ! There sat the dog with eyes as large as tea-cups, staring at him in utter amazement.

"There's a good creature !" quoth the soldier, as he spread the witch's apron on the floor, and lifted the dog upon it. He then filled his pockets with the copper coins in the chest, shut the lid, put the dog back into his place, and passed on into the second apartment.

Huzza ! There sat the dog with eyes as large as mill-wheels.

"You had really better not stare at me so," remarked the soldier, "it will make your eyes weak !" and he set the dog down on the witch's apron. But when, on raising the lid of the chest, he beheld the vast quantity of silver money it contained, he threw all his pence away in disgust, and hastened to fill his pockets and his knapsack with the pure silver.

And he passed on into the third chamber. Now, indeed, that was terrifying ! The dog in this chamber actually had a pair of eyes each as large as the round tower, and they kept rolling round and round in his head like wheels.

"Good-evening !" said the soldier, and he lifted his cap respectfully, for such a monster of a dog as this he had never in his life before seen or

heard of. He stood still for a minute or two, looking at him ; then thinking, the sooner it was done the better, he took hold of the immense creature, removed him from the chest to the floor, and raised the lid of the chest.

Oh, what a sight of gold was there ! Enough to buy not only all Copenhagen, but all the cakes and sugar-plums, all the tin soldiers, whips, and rocking-horses in the world ! Yes, he must be satisfied now.

Hastily the soldier threw out all the silver money he had stuffed into his pockets and knapsack, and took gold instead ; not only his pockets and knapsack, but his soldier's cap and boots he crammed full of gold—bright gold ! heavy gold ! He could hardly walk for the weight he carried. He lifted the dog on the chest again, banged the door of the room behind him, and called out through the tree—

“Hallo, you old witch ! pull me up again !”

“Have you got the tinder-box ?” asked the witch.

“Upon my honour, I'd quite forgotten it !” shouted the soldier, and back he went to fetch it. The witch then drew him up through the tree, and now he again stood in the high-road, his pockets, boots, knapsack, and cap stuffed with gold pieces.

“Just tell me now, what are you going to do with the tinder-box ?” inquired the soldier.

“That's no concern of yours,” returned the witch. “You've got your money ; give me my tinder-box this instant !”

“Well, take your choice,” said the soldier.

“Either tell me at once what you want with the

tinder-box, or I draw my sword, and cut off your head."

"I won't tell you!" screamed the witch.

So the soldier drew his sword and cut off her head. There she lay, but he did not waste time in looking at what he had done. He made haste to knot all his money securely in the witch's blue apron, made a bundle of it, and slung it across his back, put the tinder-box into his pocket, and went straight to the nearest town.

It was a large, handsome town—a city, in fact. He walked into the first hotel in the place, called for the best rooms, and ordered the choicest and most expensive dishes for his supper, for he was now a rich man, with plenty of gold to spend.

The servant who cleaned his boots could not help thinking they were disgracefully shabby and worn to belong to such a grand gentleman; however, next day he provided himself with new boots and very gay clothes besides.

Our soldier was now a great man, and the people of the hotel were called into give him information about all the places of amusement in the city, and about their King, and the beautiful Princess, his daughter.

"I should rather like to see her!" observed the soldier; "just tell me when I can."

"No one can see her at all," was the reply; "she dwells in a great copper palace, with ever so many walls and towers round it. No one but the King may go and visit her there, because it has been foretold that she will marry a common soldier, and our King would not like that at all."

"Shouldn't I like to see her though, just for



once," thought the soldier ; but it was of no use for him to wish it.

And now he lived such a merry life ! He went continually to the theatre, drove out in the Royal Gardens, and gave much money in alms to the poor—to all, in fact, who asked him.

And this was well done in him ; to be sure, he knew by past experience how miserable it was not to have a shilling in one's pocket.

He was always gaily dressed, and had such a crowd of friends, who, one and all, declared he was a most capital fellow, a real gentleman ; and that pleased our soldier uncommonly.

But, as he was now giving and spending every day, and never received anything in return, his money began to fail him, and at last he had only twopence left, and was forced to remove from the splendid apartments where he had lodged hitherto, and take refuge in a little bit of an attic-chamber, where he had to brush his boots and darn his clothes himself, and where none of his friends ever came to see him, because there were so many stairs to go up, it was quite fatiguing.

It was a very dark evening, and he could not afford to buy himself so much as a rushlight. However, he remembered, all at once, that there were a few matches lying in the tinder-box that the old witch had made him fetch out of the hollow tree.

So he brought out this tinder-box and began to strike a light ; but no sooner had he rubbed the flint-stone and made the sparks fly out than the door burst suddenly open, and the dog with eyes as large as tea-cups, and which he had seen in the cavern beneath the tree, stood before him



and said, "What commands has my master for his slave?"

"Upon my honour, this is a pretty joke!" cried the soldier. "A fine sort of tinder-box this is, if it will really provide me with whatever I want. Fetch me some money this instant!" said he to the dog; upon which the creature vanished, and lo! in half a minute he was back again, holding in his mouth a large bag full of pence.

So now the soldier understood the rare virtue of this charming tinder-box. If he struck the flint only once, the dog that sat on the chest full of copper came to him; if he struck it twice, the dog that watched over the silver answered his summons; and if he struck it three times, he was forthwith attended by the monstrous guardian of the golden treasure.

The soldier could now remove back to his princely apartments; he bought himself an entirely new suit of clothes, and all his friends remembered him again, and loved him as much as ever.

But one evening the thought occurred to him, "How truly ridiculous it is that no one should be allowed to see this Princess! They all say she is so very beautiful; what a shame it is that she should be mewed up in that great copper palace with the towers guarding it round! And I do want so to see her! Where's my tinder-box, by the bye?" He struck the flint, and lo! before him stood the dog with eyes as large as tea-cups.

"It is rather late, I must own," began the soldier; "but I do want to see the Princess so much, only for one minute, you know!"

And the dog was out of the door, and, before the soldier had time to think of what he should say or do, he was back again with the Princess sitting asleep on his back. A real Princess was this, so beautiful, so enchantingly beautiful ! The soldier could not help himself ; he knelt down and kissed her hand.

The dog ran back to the palace with the Princess that very minute. However, next morning, while she was at breakfast with the King and Queen, the Princess said that she had had such a strange dream during the past night. She had dreamt that she was riding on a dog, an enormously large dog, and that a soldier had knelt down to her, and kissed her hand.

"A pretty sort of a dream, indeed !" exclaimed the Queen.

And she insisted that one of the old ladies of the court should watch by the Princess's bedside on the following night, in case she should again be disturbed by dreams.

The soldier longed so exceedingly to see the fair Princess of the copper palace again ; accordingly, next evening, the dog was summoned to fetch her. So he did, and ran as fast as he could ; however, not so fast but that the ancient dame watching at the Princess's couch found time to put on a pair of waterproof boots before running after them.

She saw the dog vanish into a large house ; then, thinking to herself, "Now I know what to do," she took out a piece of chalk and made a great white cross on the door. She then went home and betook herself to rest, and the Princess was home almost as soon.

But on his way the dog chanced to observe the white cross on the door of the hotel where the soldier lived ; so he immediately took another piece of chalk and set crosses on every door throughout the town. And this was wisely done on his part.

Early in the morning came out the King, the Queen, the old court dame, and all the officers of the royal household, every one of them curious to see where the Princess had been.

"Here it is !" exclaimed the King, as soon as he saw the first street-door with a cross chalked on it.

"My dear, where are your eyes ? This is the house," cried the Queen, seeing the second door bear the cross.

"No, this is it surely—why, here's a cross, too !" cried all of them together, on discovering that there were crosses on all the doors. It was evident that their search would be in vain, and they were obliged to give it up.

But the Queen was an exceedingly wise and prudent woman ; she was good for something besides sitting in a state carriage, and looking very grand and condescending. She now took her gold scissors, cut a large piece of silk stuff into strips, and sewed these strips together, to make a pretty, neat little bag. This bag she filled with the finest, whitest flour, and with her own hands tied it to the Princess's waist ; and when this was done, again took up her golden scissors and cut a little hole in the bag, just large enough to let the flour drop out gradually all the time the Princess was moving.

That evening the dog came again, took the

Princess on his back, and ran away with her to the soldier. Oh, how the soldier loved her, and how he wished he were a Prince, that he might have this beautiful Princess for his wife !

The dog never perceived how the flour went drip, drip, dripping all the way from the palace to the soldier's room, and from the soldier's room back to the palace. So next morning the King and Queen could easily discover where their daughter had been carried ; and they took the soldier and cast him into prison.

And now he sat in the prison. Oh ! how dark it was, and how wearisome, and the turnkey kept coming in to remind him that to-morrow he was to be hanged.

This piece of news was by no means agreeable ; and the tinder-box had been left in his lodgings at the hotel.

When morning came, he could, through his narrow iron grating, watch the people all hurrying out of the town to see him hanged ; he could hear the drums beating, and presently, too, he saw the soldiers marching to the place of execution. What a crowd there was rushing by ! Among the rest was a shoemaker's apprentice in his leathern apron and slippers ; he bustled on with such speed that one of his slippers flew off and bounded against the iron staves of the soldier's prison window.

"Stop, stop, little 'prentice !" cried the soldier ; "it's of no use for you to be in such a hurry, for none of the fun will begin till I come, but if you'll oblige me by running to my lodgings and fetching me my tinder-box, I'll give you twopence. But you must run for your life !"

The shoemaker's boy liked the idea of earning twopence ; so away he raced after the tinder-box, returned, and gave it to the soldier, and then—ah, yes, now we shall hear what happened then.

Outside the city a gibbet had been erected ; round it were marshalled the soldiers with many hundred thousand people—men, women, and children ; the King and Queen were seated on magnificent thrones, exactly opposite the judges and the whole assembled council.

Already had the soldier mounted the topmost step of the ladder, already was the executioner on the point of fitting the rope round his neck when, turning to their Majesties, he began to entreat most earnestly that they would suffer a poor criminal's innocent fancy to be gratified before he underwent his punishment. He wished so much, he said, to smoke a pipe of tobacco, and as it was the last pleasure he could enjoy in this world, he hoped it would not be denied him.

The King could not refuse this harmless request, accordingly the soldier took out his tinder-box and struck the flint. Once he struck it, twice he struck it, three times he struck it, and lo ! all the three wizard dogs stood before him—the dog with eyes as large as tea-cups, the dog with eyes as large as mill-wheels, and the dog with eyes as large as the round tower !

"Now, help me, don't let me be hanged !" cried the soldier. And forthwith the three terrible dogs fell upon the judges and councillors, tossing them high into the air, so high that on falling down to the ground again they were broken in pieces.

"We will not——" began the King, but the

monster dog with the eyes as large as the round tower did not wait to hear what his Majesty would not ; he seized both him and the Queen, and flung them up into the air after the councillors. And the soldiers were all desperately frightened, and the people shouted out with one voice, " Good soldier, you shall be our King, and the beautiful Princess shall be your wife, and our Queen ! "

So the soldier was conducted into the royal carriage, and all the three dogs bounded to and fro in front, little boys whistled upon their fingers, and the guards presented arms.

The Princess was forthwith sent for and made Queen, which she liked much better than living a prisoner in the copper palace. The bridal festivities lasted for eight whole days, and the three wizard dogs sat at the banquet-table, staring about them with their great eyes.

## THE RED SHOES

THERE was once a little girl, very pretty and delicate, but so poor that in summer-time she always went barefoot, and in winter wore large wooden shoes, so that her little ankles grew quite red and sore.

In the village dwelt the shoemaker's mother. She sat down one day and made out of some old pieces of red cloth a pair of little shoes ; they were clumsy enough, certainly, but they fitted the little girl tolerably well, and she gave them to her. The little girl's name was Karen.



It was the day of her mother's funeral when the red shoes were given to Karen ; they were not at all suitable for mourning, but she had no others, and in them she walked with bare legs behind the miserable straw bier.

Just then a large old carriage rolled by ; in it sat a large old lady, who looked at the little girl and pitied her, and said to the priest, " Give me the little girl and I will take care of her."

And Karen thought it was all for the sake of the red shoes that the old lady had taken this fancy to her ; but the old lady said they were frightful, and they were burned. And Karen was dressed very neatly ; she was taught to read and to work ; and people told her she was pretty. But the mirror said, " Thou art more than pretty, thou art beautiful ! "

It happened one day that the Queen travelled through that part of the country with her little daughter, the Princess ; and all the people, Karen amongst them, crowded in front of the palace, whilst the little Princess stood, dressed in white, at a window, for every one to see her. She wore neither train nor gold crown ; but on her feet were pretty red morocco shoes—much prettier ones, indeed, than those the shoemaker's mother had made for little Karen. Nothing in the world could be compared to those red shoes !

Karen was now old enough to be confirmed ; she was to have both new frock and new shoes. The rich shoemaker in the town took the measure of her little foot. Large glass cases full of neat shoes and shining boots were fixed round the room ; however, the old lady's sight was not very good, and, naturally enough, she had not



so much pleasure in looking at them as Karen had. Amongst the shoes was a pair of red ones, just like those worn by the Princess. How gay they were ! And the shoemaker said they had been made for a count's daughter, but had not quite fitted her.

"They are of polished leather," said the old lady ; "see how they shine !"

"Yes, they shine beautifully !" exclaimed Karen. And, as the shoes fitted her, they were bought ; but the old lady did not know that they were red, for she would never have suffered Karen to go to confirmation in red shoes. But Karen did so.

Everybody looked at her feet, and, as she walked up the nave to the chancel, it seemed to her that even the antique sculptured figures on the monuments, with their stiff ruffs and long black robes, fixed their eyes on her red shoes. Of them only she thought when the Bishop laid his hand on her head, when he spoke of Holy Baptism, of her covenant with God, and how that she must now be a full-grown Christian. The organ sent forth its deep, solemn tones, the children's sweet voices mingled with those of the choristers, but Karen still thought only of her red shoes.

That afternoon, when the old lady was told that Karen had worn red shoes at her confirmation, she was much vexed, and told Karen that they were quite unsuitable ; and that, henceforward, whenever she went to church, she must wear black shoes, were they ever so old.

Next Sunday was the communion day. Karen looked first at the red shoes, then at the black

ones, then at the red again, and—put them on.

It was beautiful sunshiny weather ; Karen and the old lady walked to church through the cornfields ; the path was very dusty.

At the church door stood an old soldier ; he was leaning on crutches, and had a marvellously long beard, not white, but reddish-hued ; and he bowed almost to the earth, and asked the old lady if he might wipe the dust off her shoes. And Karen put out her little foot also. " Oh, what pretty dancing-shoes ! " quoth the old soldier ; " take care, and mind you do not let them slip off when you dance ; " and he passed his hands over them.

The old lady gave the soldier a halfpenny, and then went with Karen into church.

And every one looked at Karen's red shoes, and all the carved figures, too, bent their gaze upon them ; and when Karen knelt before the altar, the red shoes still floated before her eyes ; she thought of them and of them only ; and she forgot to join in the hymn of praise—she forgot to repeat " Our Father."

At last all the people came out of church, and the old lady got into her carriage. Karen was just lifting her foot to follow her, when the old soldier standing in the porch exclaimed, " Only look, what pretty dancing-shoes ! "

And Karen could not help it ; she felt she must make a few of her dancing steps ; and after she had once begun, her feet begun to move, just as if the shoes had received power over them ; she danced round the church-yard, she could not stop. The coachman was obliged to run after her ; he took hold of her and lifted her into the

carriage, but the feet still continued to dance, so as to kick the good old lady most cruelly. At last the shoes were taken off, and the feet had rest.

And now the shoes were put away in a press, but Karen could not help going to look at them every now and then.

The old lady lay ill in bed ; the doctor said she could not live much longer. She certainly needed careful nursing, and who should be her nurse and constant attendant but Karen ?

But there was to be a grand ball in the town, and Karen was invited ; she looked at the old lady who was almost dying—she looked at the red shoes—she put them on, there could be no harm in doing that, at least ; she went to the ball, and began to dance.

But, when she wanted to move to the right, the shoes bore her to the left ; and, when she would dance up the room, the shoes danced down the room, danced down the stairs, through the streets, and through the gates of the town. Dance she did, and dance she must, straight out into the dark wood.

Something all at once shone through the trees. She thought at first it must be the moon's bright face, shining blood-red through the night mists ; but no, it was the old soldier with the red beard. He sat there, nodding at her, and repeating, " Only look, what pretty dancing-shoes ! "

She was very much frightened, and tried to throw off her red shoes, but could not unclasp them. She hastily tore off her stockings, but the shoes she could not get rid of—they had, it seemed, grown on to her feet. Dance she did,

and dance she must, over field and meadow, in rain and in sunshine, by night and by day.

By night ! that was most horrible ! She danced into the lonely churchyard, but the dead there danced not ; they were at rest. She would fain have sat down on the poor man's grave, where the bitter tansy grew, but for her there was neither rest nor respite. She danced past the open church door ; there she saw an angel, clad in long white robes, and with wings that reached from his shoulders to the earth ; his countenance was grave and stern, and in his hand he held a broad glittering sword.

"Dance thou shalt," said he ; "dance on, in thy red shoes, till thou art pale and cold, and thy skin shrinks and crumples up like a skeleton's ! Dance thou shalt still, from door to door, and wherever proud, vain children live thou shalt knock, so that they may hear thee and fear ! Dance shalt thou, dance on——"

"Mercy !" cried Karen ; but she heard not the angel's answer, for the shoes carried her through the gate into the fields, along highways and byways, and still she must dance.

One morning she danced past a door she knew well ; she heard psalm-singing from within, and presently a coffin, strewn with flowers, was borne out. Then Karen knew that the good old lady was dead ; and she felt herself a thing forsaken by all mankind, and accursed by the Angel of God.

Dance she did, and dance she must, even through the dark night ; the shoes bore her continually over thorns and briars, till her limbs were torn and bleeding. Away she danced over

the heath to a little solitary house ; she knew that the headsman dwelt there, and she tapped with her fingers against the panes, crying—

“ Come out ! come out ! I cannot come in to you, I am dancing.”

And the headsman replied, “ Surely thou knowest not who I am. I cut off the heads of wicked men, and my axe is very sharp and keen.”

“ Cut not off my head ! ” said Karen ; “ for then I could not live to repent of my sin ; but cut off my feet with the red shoes.”

And then she confessed to him all her sin, and the headsman cut off her feet with the red shoes on them ; but even after this the shoes still danced away with those little feet over the fields, and into the deep forests.

And the headsman made her a pair of wooden feet, and hewed down some boughs to serve her as crutches ; and he taught her the psalm which is always repeated by the criminals ; and she kissed the hand that had guided the axe, and went her way over the heath.

“ Now, I have certainly suffered quite enough through the red shoes,” thought Karen ; “ I will go to church and let people see me once more ! ” and she went as fast as she could to the church-porch ; but, as she approached it, the red shoes danced before her, and she was frightened and turned her back.

All that week through she endured the keenest anguish, and shed many bitter tears. However, when Sunday came, she said to herself, “ Well, I must have suffered and striven enough by this time ; I daresay I am quite as good as many of

those who are holding their heads so high in church."

So she took courage and went there ; but she had not passed the churchyard gate before she saw the red shoes again dancing before her, and in great terror she again turned back, and more deeply than ever bewailed her sin.

She then went to the pastor's house, and begged that some employment might be given her, promising to work diligently and do all she could. She did not wish for any wages, she said ; she only wanted a roof to shelter her, and to dwell with good people. And the pastor's wife had pity on her, and took her into her service. And Karen was grateful and industrious.

Every evening she sat silently listening to the pastor while he read the Holy Scriptures aloud. All the children loved her ; but when she heard them talk about dress and finery, and about being as beautiful as a queen, she would sorrowfully shake her head.

Again Sunday came ; all the pastor's household went to church, and they asked her if she would not go too, but she sighed and looked, with tears in her eyes, upon her crutches.

When they were all gone, she went into her own little, lowly chamber—it was just but large enough to contain a bed and chair—and there she sat down with her psalm-book in her hand ; and while she was meekly and devoutly reading in it, the wind wafted the tones of the organ from the church into her room, and she lifted up her face to heaven and prayed, with tears, "O God, help me !"

Then the sun shone brightly, so brightly—and



behold ! close before her stood the white-robed Angel of God, the same whom she had seen on that night of horror at the church-porch, but his hand wielded not now, as then, a sharp, threatening sword. He held a lovely green bough, full of roses.

With this he touched the ceiling, which immediately rose to a great height, a bright gold star spangling in the spot where the Angel's green bough had touched it. And he touched the walls, upon which the room widened, and Karen saw the organ, the old monuments, and the congregation all sitting in their richly-carved seats, and singing from their psalm-books.

For the church had come home to the poor girl in her narrow chamber, or rather the chamber had grown, as it were, into the church ; she sat with the rest of the pastor's household, and, when the psalm was ended, they looked up and nodded to her, saying, " Thou didst well to come, Karen ! "

" This is mercy ! " said she.

And the organ played again, and the children's voices in the choir mingled so sweetly and plaintively with it. The bright sunbeams streamed warmly through the windows upon Karen's seat. Her heart was so full of sunshine, of peace and gladness, that it broke ; her soul flew upon a sunbeam to her Father in heaven, where not a look of reproach awaited her, not a word was breathed of the red shoes.



## THE FELLOW-TRAVELLERS

POOR Hans was so unhappy, for his father was very ill, and at the point of death. There was no one but himself to tend the sick man in his little low-roofed chamber ; the lamp on the table burned with a faint, expiring light, and it was already quite late in the evening.

"Thou hast always been a good and dutiful son to me, Hans," said the dying father ; "fear not ; our Lord will be with thee, and help thee through the world."

As he spoke, he looked fondly at the boy with his grave, loving eyes. Then, fetching a deep breath, he died as calmly as if he had but fallen asleep.

But Hans wept bitterly, for now he had no friend or relative in all the wide world, neither father nor mother, neither sister nor brother. Poor Hans ! He knelt down beside the bed, and kissed his dead father's hand, weeping such bitter, salt tears all the while, till at last his eyes closed through utter weariness, and he fell asleep, his head resting against the hard corner of the bedstead.

He dreamed a strange dream : he saw sun and moon bowing before him, and he saw his father fresh and healthy again ; and he heard him laugh as he had been wont to laugh when he was right happy and merry.

A beautiful girl, wearing a gold crown upon her long dark hair, smilingly extended her hand

to Hans, and his father said, "Seest thou, what a rare bride thou hast won? She is the very loveliest maiden in the world."

Then he awoke; all the glory and beauty of his dream was gone; his father lay cold and dead in his bed, and there was no one with him. Poor Hans!

The next week the funeral took place. Hans followed close behind the coffin; he watched it until only one corner was left uncovered; one more shovelful of earth, and that, too, was seen no longer. He felt as if his heart must burst with sorrow.

The congregation around him were singing a psalm; words and music melted into each other so sweetly that they brought the tears into his eyes. He wept, and weeping relieved the violence of his grief.

The sun was shining gloriously on the green trees, as if he would say, "Thou must not be so unhappy, Hans! See how beautiful and blue is yonder sky; far beyond it dwells thy father now, and there he prays the Almighty that He will be thy guardian and shield, and that all may go well with thee."

"I will always be good," thought Hans, "and then I shall some day join my father in heaven; and oh, what joy it will be when we see each other again! I shall have so many things to tell him, and he, too, will tell me so many things; he will teach me about heavenly bliss and glory, as he taught me here on earth. Oh, what joy it will be!"

Hans thought over this fancy so long, and the picture became so vivid in his mind, that he

smiled with pleasure even whilst the tears were still undried on his face.

The little birds in the chestnut-trees above his head kept twittering—"Quivit, quirri-quirrivit ;" they were so joyous, although they, too, had been present at the funeral. But they surely knew that the dead man was now at rest, perhaps in bliss ; that he had, or soon would have, wings, far larger and lovelier than theirs, because he had been a good man whilst he lived on earth, and therefore they rejoiced.

Hans watched them flying away from the green trees—far out into the world, and he felt the most ardent longing to fly with them.

His first care was now to carve a large wooden cross to plant upon his father's grave ; he brought it to the spot that same evening, and found that the grave was already strewn with sand and flowers. Stranger hands had done this, for all loved the good father who was dead.

Early next morning, Hans packed up his little travelling bundle, and carefully secured in his belt his whole inheritance, consisting of fifty-six dollars and a few silver pennies, with which he intended to start on his wanderings through the wide world.

First, however, he went to the churchyard, to his father's grave, repeated the Lord's Prayer over it, and then said, "Farewell, dear father ! I will always be good, that thou mayest still pray the Almighty to be my guide and shield."

By the side of the footpath which Hans now trod grew many wild flowers, which looked fresh and bright in the warm sunshine ; and whenever the wind passed that way, they nodded

to Hans, as if they would say, "Welcome to the green meadow-lands ! Is it not pleasant here ? "

But Hans turned round once more to cast a last glance at the old church where he had been baptised when an infant, and whither he had gone every Sunday with his father to worship God and sing His praises. And on looking back he saw, standing in one of the holes of the church-tower, the little Nisse, with his pointed red cap, and shading his face, with his bent arm, from the sun, which shone straight into his eyes.

Hans nodded farewell to him, and the little Nisse swung his red cap aloft, pressed his hand to his heart, and kissed his fingers repeatedly, to show that he wished the young traveller well, and hoped he might have a right pleasant journey.

Hans now began to think of the vast number of beautiful sights that he would see in the great glorious world, and he walked on faster and faster, farther and farther, by roads that he had never traversed before. He knew not the villages he passed through, nor the people that he met ; he was now quite in a strange land, and surrounded by strangers.

The first night he was forced to lay himself down to rest in a hay-stack, under the open sky ; other couch he had none. But he was perfectly satisfied, and thought that not even the King could be lodged more magnificently than he was.

The wide meadow with the brooklet flowing through it, and with the blue heavens spread above, formed a beautiful state-bedchamber. The green turf, with its tiny red and white flowerets, was his carpet ; the elder-bushes and wild roses were vases of flowers ; and the brook-

let, with the reeds growing on its banks and nodding to him a friendly "Good-morning!" and "Good-evening!" served as his water-ewer. The moon was a gloriously large night-lamp, hung high up amid the blue canopy of heaven, yet without any danger of setting fire to the curtains; Hans could sleep in perfect security. And he slept well and soundly, and did not wake till the sun had risen, and all the little birds around him sang loudly, "Good-morning! good-morning! have you not yet got up?"

On continuing his wanderings and reaching the next village, he heard the church-bells ringing; it was Sunday, and all the people were going to church. And Hans went with them, sang hymns, and listened reverently to the Word of God, and felt as if he were once again in his own parish church, where he had been baptised, and had, Sunday after Sunday, knelt by his father's side.

In the churchyard outside there were so many graves, and on some of them high grass was growing. "Perhaps my father's grave will soon look like these," thought Hans, "now that I am away, and there is no one to pluck out the grass and strew flowers over it."

So he began to busy himself with clearing the graves here and there from weeds, set upright those wooden crosses that had fallen down, and restored the wreaths, which the wind had carried away, to their places.

"Who knows but that some one may do the same by my father's grave, since I cannot do it?" thought he.

At the churchyard gate stood an old beggar-

man leaning on his crutch ; Hans gave him his few silver pennies and then went on his way, cheerful and contented, farther out into the world.

Towards evening a violent tempest arose ; Hans made great haste to get under shelter, but dark night had gathered round him before he had caught sight of a house where he might take refuge. At last he discovered himself to be close beside a little church, which stood alone on the summit of a hill ; the door was ajar and he crept in. Here he would stay till the storm was allayed.

" I will sit down in this corner," said he ; " I am quite tired out, and it will do me good to rest a little while." And after first folding his hands and repeating his evening prayer, he leaned his head back against the wall and quickly fell into a sound sleep, whilst it lightened and thundered outside. When he awoke it was midnight, the storm had passed by, and the moon shone in through the high church windows, its light falling full upon an open coffin that lay on the floor in the midst of the church. A dead man lay in the coffin, and it had been taken into the church to be left there till the grave was dug for it next morning, because the dead man had been a stranger, with no house of his own and no relatives to take charge of his remains.

Hans did not feel terrified at this sight, for he had a good conscience, and he knew that the dead can do no harm to any one ; only the living, the wicked, it is that work us ill. And two wicked living men were those dark figures that stood by the coffin ; they were come with the evil intent of taking the poor corpse out of the coffin, and throwing it out at the church door.



"Why do you want to do that?" asked Hans, when he discovered their intention; "it is very wicked of you. In God's name, let the dead rest in peace!"

"Rest, indeed!" cried one of the men; "when he has made fools of us both, when he has borrowed money from us which he could not repay; and now he is dead, and we shall never get a farthing of our due. But we'll have our revenge, that we will, and he shall lie like a dog outside the church door!"

"I have only fifty-six dollars," said Hans; "it is the whole of my portion, but I will gladly give them to you, if you will promise me, upon your honour, to leave this poor dead man in peace. I shall be able to get on without the money, no doubt; I have strong, healthy limbs of my own, and our Lord will help me."

"Of course," replied the two wicked men, "if you will pay his debts we shall do him no harm, you may depend upon that!" And so they took the money that Hans offered them, laughed loud and scornfully at his simplicity, and went their way. Hans then laid the corpse straight again in the coffin, folded the cold, stiff hands, and bade the dead man farewell. He then left the church, and walked with a light heart through the wood.

The moonbeams pierced in here and there through the trees surrounding him, and, wherever their clear light fell, were revealed the figures of the pretty, tiny elves, gambolling so merrily, and they were not in the least startled by his approach. They knew that he must be good and innocent, since none but those who are free from evil

thoughts and wishes have power to see the elves.

Some of them were no larger than one of Hans's fingers, and had their long flaxen hair fastened up with golden combs ; by two and two they see-sawed upon the heavy drops of dew that spangled the leaves and grass. Every now and then a dewdrop trickled down, and both little sprites were flung down with it into the long grass, and then what laughter there was among the rest of the merry, mocking elves !

It was quite droll to see their play. They sang, too, and Hans recollected all their pretty songs and glees ; he had heard them often when he was a little boy. And great brown spiders, with silver crowns on their heads, were made to spin long suspension-bridges and palaces from one tree to another for them, and the dew fell upon these delicate structures, and they glistened like glass in the clear moonlight ; and thus, gambols went on till sunrise. Then the tiny elves crept into the flower-cups to sleep, and the winds took hold of their airy castles and suspension-bridges, and carried them by fragments through the air.

Hans had just stepped out from the wood, when a deep manly voice shouted from behind him, "Hallo, comrade ! whither go you ?"

"Out into the wide world," replied Hans. "I have neither father nor mother ; I am a poor unfriended lad, but I trust the angels will help me and be with me."

"I, too, am going into the world," rejoined the stranger. "Suppose we join company ?"

"Why should we not ?" answered Hans ; and thus they soon were agreed. They went on together, talked, and became good friends. But

Hans quickly discovered his stranger comrade was much cleverer and more experienced than he was ; he seemed to have travelled in every country on the earth, and to have learned everything.

It was almost noon, and the sun stood high above their heads, when they sat down under a wide-spreading tree to eat their breakfast.

While they were thus engaged, it so chanced that an old woman, very much wrinkled and almost crook-backed, came hobbling by on her crutch. Over her shoulders she carried a bundle of fagots, which she had collected in the wood ; she had gathered up her apron, and out of one corner of it projected three bundles of ferns and willow-boughs. Just as she was passing them, her foot slipped, she fell, and gave vent to a shrill cry of pain, for she had broken her leg, poor old woman !

Hans instantly sprang up to help her, and proposed that they should carry her home ; but his companion coolly began to unpack his knapsack, took out of it a little box, and said that he had there a healing ointment which would at once heal her leg and restore its strength, so that she would be able to get home without any assistance, and that as easily as if she had not fallen down at all.

But, if he did so much good to her, he should require her to do something for him, namely, to give him the three bundles of ferns and willow-boughs which she carried in her apron.

"So you will be well paid, will you, master doctor?" quoth the old crone, with a strange, uncomfortable smile distorting her features. She did not like to part with her willow-twigs, she

said, for she had some trouble in procuring them; however, it was not exactly pleasant either, to lie in the high-road with her leg broken.

Accordingly, she gave up the contents of her apron to the stranger, and he, in return, bent over her and anointed her leg with his precious ointment; whereupon the old woman rose up and hobbled onward with much less difficulty than before she had fallen down. A famous ointment was this, but it is not to be had at the apothecary's.

"What can you want with that dry wood?" inquired Hans of this fellow-traveller.

"A fancy of mine!" was the reply. "They are in my eyes prettier and more fragrant than bouquets of roses. We can none of us account for our fancies, you know."

"Surely we shall have a storm presently," observed Hans, after a pause, pointing to some dark, threatening forms that rose up into the sky over the horizon. "What terribly black, thick clouds!"

"What a mistake," said his companion; "they are not clouds at all, they are mountains! You cannot imagine how fresh and keen is the air on their crests, where clouds are around as well as above you, and such a wide prospect is spread beneath! We are getting on bravely!"

But though these cloud-like mountains seemed so near, the wanderers wended on the whole day, without getting close up to them. Black fir-woods clothed the mountain sides, and stones as large as towns lay scattered here and there. It would cost them hard labour, the stranger said, to cross the mountains. So he and Hans agreed to

turn into an inn and rest, so that they might start fresh and strong on the morrow upon their mountain-rambles.

The guest-room in the inn they found crowded with people, for a man with a puppet-show had just arrived and prepared his little theatre, and the people had been gathering together in this apartment to see the pretty sight. So they sat round, ranged in chairs, but the best and foremost place of all had been secured by a stout old butcher, his mastiff—a grim-looking animal—standing by his side, and staring with all his might, just like any other spectator.

And now the show began. A King and Queen were discovered sitting on magnificent thrones and wearing gold crowns on their heads, and long trains to their robes. The prettiest little wooden dolls, with glass eyes and thick mustachios, were stationed at the doors and windows, which they kept opening and shutting, so that their Majesties might enjoy a free current of air.

It was such a pretty show, and all was going on so smoothly and pleasantly—no tears, no bloodshed, nothing sad and tragic—it was a perfect comedy, when, unfortunately, just as the Queen rose up from her throne and walked across the floor, the great mastiff—whom the sturdy master, in his eagerness to watch the show, had quite forgotten to hold in—the great mastiff, I say (is it quite impossible to guess what he could be thinking of), sprang up, and with one bound clearing the stage, seized the pretty Queen by her slender waist so roughly that she was nearly broken in two; it was really quite terrible to see her!

The poor showman was so much grieved by this mischance that he was very near shedding tears. The Queen was his very best doll, and the mastiff had actually bitten her head off before he could be forced to give up his victim.

However, the spectators having all gone their ways, Hans's fellow-traveller went up to the poor man and comforted him, assuring him he would find a remedy. And taking out of his knapsack the little jar which he had used to heal the old woman's leg, he rubbed some of the ointment over the wounded doll, after which not only was it perfectly healed, but it received the power of moving all its limbs by itself, without there being any need of pulling the wires. It had, indeed, become almost like a living human being, except that it could not speak. The showman was delighted beyond measure to see his Queen-doll dance and walk by herself; it was what none of his other dolls could do.

Late in the night, when all the people in the inn were in bed, there was heard a heavy groaning and sighing, and it went on so long, that at last everybody got up to see what could be the matter.

The puppet showman rushed in a great hurry to his little theatre, for it seemed to him that the sighing came from it; and a strange sight met his eyes. The King and the soldiers were lying heaped one upon another, keeping up a perpetual groaning, and trying to make their great glassy eyes expressive of sorrowful entreaty, for they were all wanting to be anointed, as their Queen had been, so that they, too, might be able to move of themselves.

The Queen, meantime, knelt on one knee, and



lifted her pretty crown on high, as though imploring, "Take my crown, if you will, only anoint my consort and my courtiers !" and the showman was so much affected by this scene that he immediately offered to give the stranger all the money he might receive for his entertainment on the following evening, if he would anoint four or five of his best dolls with his wonder-working ointment.

But the stranger said he did not want any money ; he wished nothing of him except the large sabre which the showman wore by his side, and, on that being given him, he readily anointed six of the dolls, which forthwith danced so prettily and gracefully that all the young girls in the inn who were present felt an irresistible inclination to begin dancing too. \*

And dance they did : and coachman and kitchen-maid, waiter and chamber-maid, danced also, and all the guests joined them ; nay, even the fire-tongs advanced and led out the shovel to perform the mazurka, but no sooner had these two made the first step, than they both fell down, one over the other. Oh, what a merry night was that !

Next morning Hans and his fellow-traveller started early to climb up the high mountains through the vast pine-woods. They had clambered up so high that the church-towers far beneath them showed like little red berries scattered among the green of the landscape, and they could see over so many, many miles of country.

So much of the beauty of this fair world Hans had never before seen ; and the sun shone

warmly amid the blue vault of heaven, and the wind bore to him the notes of hunters' bugle-horns from various quarters. Those notes were sweet and wild, and the tears stood in his eyes with transport and gratitude.

His comrade, meantime, stood by with folded hands, as if in a deep reverie, yet nothing above or beneath, in sky or mountain-cleft, in wood or town, escaped his keen glance.

Presently, a strain of deep, unearthly music seemed floating over their heads ; Hans looked up, and behold ! a large white swan hovering in the air above, singing as Hans had never before heard any bird sing, but it was its death-song. Ever fainter and weaker grew the notes, its graceful throat was bowed forward, and slowly it sank downwards, till at last it fell dead at their feet—the beautiful bird !

“ See what magnificent wings the creature has ! ” observed the stranger ; “ so large and purely white ! They are well worth having ; I will take them with me. Now, you see, Hans,” added he, as with one stroke he severed the wings from the dead swan, “ that this sabre is of some use to me.”

They continued their wanderings over the mountains for many, many leagues, till at last they saw lying beneath them a large city with more than a hundred towers and cupolas, glistening like silver in the sunshine. In the very heart of this city rose a stately marble palace, its roofs overlaid with red gold ; here dwelt the King of the country.

Our two travellers did not choose to go straight into the city ; they turned into a little wayside

inn to shake the dust off their clothes, for they wished to make themselves look somewhat more decent and respectable before they appeared in the streets of the city.

And here the innkeeper began to talk to them about the King, how that he was such a kind good-hearted old man, and had never done an ill turn to any one all his life ; but that his daughter, the Princess, alas ! she was a very wicked lady. She had no lack of beauty, if beauty could recommend her, for scarcely in all the world could a fairer maiden be found ; but then she was a sorceress, and through her malignant arts many a young and comely prince had lost his life.

She had given free leave to all men, of whatever condition of life, to come and be her suitors ; any one might come, be he prince, or be he a tailor, it was all the same to her. She made him play with her at, " What are my thoughts like ? " and, if he could guess her thoughts three times, then she engaged to give him her hand, and he would be King over the whole country when her father died. But, if he could not guess right the three times—and no one yet ever had done so—she always caused him to be immediately put to a cruel death ; some were hanged, others beheaded, so wantonly wicked and bloodthirsty was this Princess.

Her father, the good old King, was cut to the heart by her cruelty and perversity, but still he could not interfere, for he had once declared that he would have nothing to do with her love affairs, that she might do exactly as she pleased. So every time that there came a young prince to

play at this fatal game with her and failed, he was either hanged or beheaded ; neither was it of any use to warn him beforehand, the Princess could so infatuate the people when she chose.

The old King, the innkeeper went on to say, was so much afflicted by all the misery thus brought upon the land, that he and all his soldiers spent one day every year in fasting and prayer, kneeling all day on the hard stones, praying that the Princess's cruel heart might relent ; but relent she never would.

All the old women, who were given to brandy-drinking, on that day were wont to colour their potation black before they drank it, in token of their sympathy with the universal mourning—and what could they do more than that ?

"The hateful Princess !" exclaimed Hans, when the innkeeper had finished his relation. "To think of her bewitching people's hearts in this manner ! I should never be such a fool, however charming she might be ; I should hate her rather than love her !"

Just as he spoke thus, a loud "Hurrah !" from the people in the road made him hurry to the window. The Princess herself was riding past, and so enchantingly beautiful was she that people invariably forgot all her cruelty in their admiration, and always burst into a loud cry of joy whenever she appeared among them.

Twelve fair young girls, all clad in white silk robes, and each bearing a golden tulip in her hand, rode on coal-black steeds before or beside her ; the Princess herself had a snow-white palfrey, very richly caparisoned. Her riding-habit was of cloth of gold, sewn, as it were, with

rubies and diamonds ; the whip which she held in her hand glittered like a sunbeam ; the gold crown that pressed her rich dark tresses seemed composed of stars, and the light gauze-like mantle that robed her shoulders was composed of many thousand various-hued butterflies' wings.

Magnificent indeed was her attire ; but all this splendour was as nothing compared with the sunshine of her smile, the piercing light that flashed from her dark eyes, and the majesty enthroned on her high white forehead.

But as soon as Hans beheld her, the blood rushed to his face, and he could not utter a single word. The Princess looked, in truth, the very same as the fair maiden wearing the gold crown whom he had seen in his dream on the night of his father's death. So beautiful he could not have imagined any mortal maiden to be, and he could not help loving her with all his heart. It could not be true, he said to himself, the tale he had heard of her being a hard, cruel sorceress, who would have people hanged or beheaded when they could not guess her thoughts. " Every one has free leave to become her suitor, even the poorest. I will go up to the palace and woo her, for I feel I cannot live without her."

They all tried to persuade him to give up this idea, assuring him that he would fare no better than the suitors who had been before him. His fellow-traveller, especially, entreated him on no account to go up to the palace, but Hans would not listen to these friendly warnings. He carefully cleaned his dress, brushed his shoes till they were quite bright, washed his hands and face, combed his long fair hair, and then started on

his way alone through the city, straight up to the marble palace.

"Come in!" said the King's voice, when Hans knocked at the door.

Hans entered, and the good old King came forward to meet him, wearing his dressing-gown and embroidered slippers, yet with his gold crown on his head, and holding in one hand the sceptre, in the other the orb—the symbols of kingly power.

"Wait a bit," said he; and he put the golden orb under his arm, that he might extend his hand to Hans, and bid him heartily welcome.

But as soon as ever he heard that Hans came as a suitor to his daughter, he began to weep most bitterly, so that sceptre and orb rolled down on the floor, and he was obliged to dry his eyes on his dressing-gown—the poor old King!

"Do not think of it!" implored he; "it will be with you as with all the rest. Come and look here."

And he led Hans out into the Princess's pleasure-garden, and a ghastly sight greeted him here. To many of the trees hung the wasted skeletons of three or four kings' sons who had wooed the Princess, but had not succeeded in guessing her thoughts. Every time the wind rustled the foliage of the trees, the dry skeletons rattled and clattered together.

So horrible was the sight and sound that the birds had all been scared away, and now never durst rest their wings in this grove of death. The flowers were tied up to human bones instead of sticks, and grisly skulls grinned from behind every flower-pot, or every plant that required



shade from the winds. A pleasant garden, in truth, was this for a Princess !

"Here thou mayest see," said the old King to Hans, "what thy fate will be. Give up the mad thought, I beseech thee ! Think, too, how unhappy it will make me. Have pity on me, if not on thyself !"

Hans kissed the hand of the kind old King, and tried to comfort him with the assurance that he felt quite sure that he should succeed in winning the Princess, and that he could not possibly live without her.

And now the Princess herself, returning from her excursion, came riding into the court of the palace with all her ladies. The King and Hans went up to her and wished her good-day.

She was so gracious and friendly, she offered her hand to Hans, and he loved her more passionately than ever, and could less than ever persuade himself that she was really the wicked sorceress that people took her to be.

They returned to the saloon, and a troop of prettily dressed little pages came in and handed round sweetmeats and gingerbread nuts to every one—the King, the Princess, her ladies, and Hans. But the old King was so sad and downcast that he could enjoy nothing, and the gingerbread nuts were too hard for his teeth.

It was settled that Hans should come up to the palace again next morning, and that the judges and the whole assembled council were to be present as witnesses to the Princess's game of "What are my thoughts like ?" If he guessed rightly this first time he was to come again in like manner on the two following days, but,

hitherto, not one of the suitors to the Princess's hand had survived the first day of trial.

Hans did not lose his confidence in the least ; on the contrary, his spirits rose more and more ; he thought only of the beautiful Princess, and would not believe but that he should succeed, how he knew not, and would not trouble himself with thinking about it. Almost dancing with joy he made his way back out of the town to the roadside inn, where his fellow-traveller was awaiting him.

And here he could never weary of telling how kind and gracious the Princess had been towards him, and of extolling her surpassing loveliness. Already he longed most ardently for the morrow, when he might again go to the palace, and must guess the thought of his beloved.

But his fellow-traveller sadly shook his head. "I love thee so much," he said, "and we might yet have stayed a long while together, and now I must lose thee already ! My poor, dear Hans ! But I will not disturb thy happiness on the last evening, perhaps, that we may spend together. We will be merry, right merry ; to-morrow when thou art gone I shall have time enough to weep."

All the people in the city had heard by this time of the arrival of a new suitor to the Princess, and there was general mourning in consequence. The theatres were shut up, the gardens and promenades were deserted, the King and the priests spent the day kneeling in the churches, and the cake-women tied black crape sashes round their pretty sugar figures, for it was thought impossible that Hans could fare better than the suitors that had come before him.

That evening the stranger ordered a large bowl of punch to be brought in, and told Hans that he must drink to the Princess's health. But no sooner had Hans emptied his first glass than he felt his eyelids grow so heavy that he could no longer hold them up ; he sank back in his chair and fell into a sound sleep.

His fellow-traveller lifted him gently into bed, and it being now quite night and dark, he took out the large wings which he had cut off from the dead swan, and fastened them upon his shoulders. Then, taking the bundles of ferns the old woman had given him, he opened the window and flew out of the city straight to the marble palace, where he concealed himself in the corner of a bow-window belonging to the Princess's sleeping-room.

Perfect stillness reigned throughout the city. At last the clock struck a quarter to twelve, upon which the Princess's window opened, and the Princess herself, clad in a loose white mantle, and borne up by long black wings, flew out. Over the town she flew, and towards a high mountain in the distance ; but Hans's fellow-traveller instantly made himself invisible, and followed the Princess through the air close behind her.

A pleasant excursion was that ! But the stranger waved his bundle of ferns three times in the air, muttering, " Blow, winds ; blow north, south, east, and west ! "

Then the four winds arose and struggled in the air, beat in the Princess's face, and took hold of her white over-wrapper, and kept it fluttering to and fro till it spread out like a wide ship-sail on each side of her, the moon shining through it.

"How cold it is! how dreadfully cold, and how windy!" sighed the Princess. At last she reached the mountain and tapped it with her hand, and a deep hollow rumbling, like thunder, was heard from within, and the mountain yawned asunder and opened. The Princess entered, Hans's fellow-traveller still following; no one could see him, however, for he was invisible.

They passed through a long wide passage whose walls glistened strangely, for more than a thousand red-hot spiders were running up and down them. The passage led into a large hall built of silver and gold. Flowers, some red, some blue, and as large as sunflowers, glistened from the walls; but, if any one had been so far deluded as to approach near to pluck them, he would soon have discovered that their green twisted stalks were in reality poisonous snakes, and that the false flowers themselves were formed by the red and blue fire that issues from the venomous mouths of these snakes. The ceiling was sewn with glow-worms and bats, which kept flapping their thin bluish wings to and fro incessantly.

In the centre of the hall stood a throne, supported upon four horse-skeletons, harnessed with the web of the fiery-red spiders; the throne itself was of milk-white glass, and the cushions inside it were supplied by little black mice, who were continually snapping and biting at one another's tails. Above it was a canopy of crimson spider's webs, studded with the prettiest little green flies, all glittering like precious stones.

On the throne sat an aged troll, wearing a crown on his great ugly head, and holding a sceptre in his hand. He kissed the Princess on

the forehead, and bade her sit down on the throne beside him. And now the band struck up. Great black grasshoppers played on the Jew's harp, and the owl came out with his "Tu-whit, tu-whoo!" as chief vocalist. It was, in sooth, a ridiculous concert. Little black nisses, with wills-o'-the-wisp on their caps, danced round and round the hall.

The other personages of the troll's court certainly entered the saloon with a very grand air, and did their best to keep up the dignity befitting their gay attire. But it did not need the keen-sightedness of our stranger traveller, who, having stationed himself close behind the throne, saw and heard everything, though no one could see him, to perceive what shams they were; for, in reality, they were nothing else than broomsticks with cabbage heads, which the troll had bewitched into some sort of life, and to which he had given gaily embroidered dresses. They just served to keep up his state, and what did he want more?

After the dancing had gone on for some time, the Princess told the troll that she had a new suitor, and asked what she should think of next morning when he came up to the palace to guess her thoughts.

"Listen! I will tell thee," replied the troll. "Choose something very easy and simple, and he will be the less likely to think of it. Think on thine own shoe; that he will never guess. Then you can have his head cut off; but mind, don't forget to bring me his eyes to-morrow night. I will have them, or I will have thine own. Remember our compact!"

The Princess bowed very low, and promised not to forget. Presently the troll repeated some magic words which made the mountain groan and yawn asunder, and the Princess flew out again.

But Hans's fellow-traveller followed her, swift as thought, and with his wizard ferns conjured up the four winds to blow more strongly than before ; and the Princess sighed heavily over the cold and windy weather, and made all possible haste to get back to the bow-window of her sleeping room. And the stranger, who was right weary of his night exercise, flew quickly back to the room where Hans was asleep, took off his wings, and laid himself down to rest.

It was quite early in the morning when Hans awoke. He left his bed, and his fellow-traveller arose also. He would not tell Hans of his flying adventure during the night, but, without making any mention of the mountain troll, he begged Hans, when he went up to the palace, to ask the Princess if she had not thought of her own shoe.

"I may as well guess that as anything else," was Hans's reply ; "and, truly, I believe the angels may have whispered it to thee during the night, my friend, for I hope and trust they are on my side. But now let us bid each other farewell, for if I do not guess right, I shall hardly see thee again."

So Hans went on his way to the palace. The wide festal saloon was crowded with people. The councillors were seated in large easy-chairs, with cushions of eiderdown to lean their heads upon, because they all had the headache through having so many hard questions to think about.



The old King rose up when Hans came in, and began drying his eyes with a white pocket-handkerchief. Presently, the Princess entered. She looked lovelier even than yesterday, and greeted the whole assembly with such a winning smile, such enchanting grace ! But to Hans she held out her hand, saying, " Good-morning, my friend."

And now the game began : " What are my thoughts like ? " asked the Princess, and she looked at Hans so archly, so merrily, as she spoke. But no sooner did she hear him bring out in answer the single word " Shoe," than she turned pale, and all her limbs began to tremble. This availed her nothing ; she could not deny that he had guessed right.

Hurrah ! how glad the good old King was. He jumped up and kicked his slippers into the air for joy ; and the spectators all clapped their hands, some to applaud the King, some to show how pleased they were at Hans's victory—for victory it was for this one day, at least.

His comrade, too, was well satisfied when he heard of his success ; but as for Hans himself he folded his hands in quiet thankfulness that he had been saved from peril of death. The very next day he must undergo his second trial.

The evening passed just like the foregoing evening. As soon as Hans was asleep, his fellow-traveller flew out, and followed the Princess to the weird mountain. This time, however, he took with him not only the old woman's fernbundle but one of the willow-boughs, and called up therewith a storm, not only of wind, but of rain. In torrents it poured upon the poor Princess, and

right glad was she to reach the shelter of the mountain.

Within it no one perceived the stranger, but he was there, nevertheless, and heard and saw everything that went on. This time it was settled that the Princess should think of her glove. Hans received his instructions accordingly, and could not but guess aright ; and such joy as there was at the palace !

The whole court cut capers, just as they had seen the King do on the former occasion ; but, as for the Princess, she threw herself down upon a sofa, and would not speak a single word.

And now Hans had but to guess once more. If he succeeded on the third day also, the beautiful Princess, whom he loved so passionately, would become his bride, and he should be king over the whole country after her old father's death ; but if he guessed wrong, then, alas ! he must lose his life, and his bright blue eyes would be carried as a tribute to the wicked mountain troll.

Hans went to rest earlier than usual that evening, and soon fell into a sound and peaceful slumber. His fellow-traveller then fastened the swan-wings on his shoulders, buckled the sabre to his girdle, took all the three wizard wands in his hand, and, thus equipped, flew off to the marble palace.

The night was pitch dark, and the wind had risen already. But when the traveller had waved aloft each of his wands three times, thus stirring up the threefold powers of wind, rain, and hail, a most tremendous storm burst forth. The trees in the garden of skeletons bowed like reeds to the

blast ; it lightened every moment, and the thunder rolled on continuously as though it would never cease the whole night long.

The bow-window opened, and the Princess fluttered out into the wild air. She was pale as death—not that she was afraid of tempests, for she was wont to delight in them ; but this night, when her white mantle spread out around her like a sail unfurled by the wind, when the rain streamed pitilessly on her face, and the hail-stones pelted her on all sides, she hovered on slowly and with pain, and her wings could scarcely bear her up ; she expected to sink to the ground every instant. At last she won the weird mountain.

“There’s such a hail-storm without !” said she, on entering ; “I never knew such weather as it is.”

“One may have too much, even of a good thing,” replied the troll.

And now she told him, shivering with fear and dread all the while she spoke, that Hans had most unaccountably guessed right the second time ; if he should win on the third trial also the game would be his, indeed, and she might never again come to the weird mountain, never again pay her tribute to the troll, as she had sworn to do. Her life would be forfeit, or, even if the troll would free her from her engagement, she could not live, since she should be forbidden to practise the magic arts it had cost her so much to learn. And she wept most bitterly.

“Never fear ! he shall not guess this time, depend upon it,” replied the troll. “I will find something he has never thought of in his life,

unless, indeed, he be a greater wizard than myself. But now let us be right merry !” And he took the Princess by the hand, and danced with her all round the hall, the nisses and wills-o’-the-wisp all doing the like, and the red spiders springing merrily up and down the glistening walls. The owl tu-whoood and tu-whitted with all his might, the crickets chirped, and the black grasshoppers blew on the Jew’s harps. A regular wizard ball was that.

After they had danced themselves weary, the Princess said she must hasten home, for she feared she might be missed at the palace. The troll, who seemed unwilling to let her go, then declared he would escort her, so that they might have the more time together.

So away they flew through the storm, the traveller waving his three wands close behind them. Never had the troll been out in such a hurricane.

When they arrived at the palace he bade the Princess farewell, and at the same moment whispered to her, “Think of my head !”

But Hans’s fellow-traveller overheard it, and while the Princess was slipping into her room through the window, and just as the troll was about to turn round and fly back to his mountain, he seized him by the long black beard, and, drawing his sabre, cut off his huge demon head from his shoulders. The trunk he threw into the sea, to be food for the fishes ; but the head he merely dipped into the water, and then wrapped it up in his silk handkerchief, took it home with him to the inn, and lay down to rest.

Next morning he gave the bundle to Hans,

charging him not to untie it until the Princess called upon him to declare what she was thinking of.

There was such a crowd in the King's hall that day that the people all pressed one against the other, like radishes tied up in a bunch, and every man trod on his neighbours' toes. The judges and councillors all sat in their easy-chairs, with the soft eider-down cushions to lean their heads on, and the old King had on an entirely new suit of clothes ; his gold crown and his sceptre, too, had been freshly polished, and glittered marvellously. But the Princess was very pale, and was clad in black robes, as if she were going to a funeral.

"What are my thoughts like?" asked she of Hans, for the third time, and immediately he untied the handkerchief ; but he started back with horror and amazement on beholding the hideous head of the mountain-troll. And a shudder thrilled through all the bystanders ; and the Princess sat mute and motionless as a statue, and could not utter a syllable.

At last she rose from her seat, and held out her snow-white hand to Hans, in token that he had guessed rightly this third time also, and thus had won the game. Looking neither at him nor at any one present, her eyes still riveted on the misshapen head in the handkerchief, and drawing in her breath heavily, she sighed rather than said, "Now art thou my lord and master ! This evening must our nuptials be solemnised."

"Oh, with all my heart !" cried the old King ;  
"yes, this very evening ; how glad I am !"

And the whole assembly burst into a loud "Hurrah !"

The band was called out to play in the streets, the church-bells were all set ringing, and the cake-women were in a great hurry to take the black crape off their sugar figures, for mourning was now changed into joy. Three oxen were roasted whole in the market-place, besides fowls, and ducks without end ; so that every one who wanted might come and have dinner. The fountains flowed with wine instead of water ; and if you went into the baker's shop to buy a penny roll, he would give you six buns into the bargain—buns with currants in them, too.

In the evening the whole city was illuminated ; the soldiers fired their guns, the little boys ran about letting off crackers ; there was eating and drinking, dancing and singing in the palace, among all the fair ladies and gallant cavaliers of the court—no end to the rejoicings !

But amid all this gaiety the Princess remained pale and sad ; she had no love for Hans in return for the love he bore her, and she still mourned for being debarred the practice of her secret arts.

Hans at last went in despair to his fellow-traveller to ask his counsel how to win his fair bride's love, and to lure forth a smile from her face. And his fellow-traveller gave him a little vial filled with a colourless liquid, like water, together with three feathers from the swan-wings, bidding him steep each of the three feathers in the liquid, and then sprinkle the Princess's forehead with the drops clinging to the feathers ; three times must he sprinkle her with each of the



three feathers, and thus she would become free from her enchantment.

Hans did exactly as his fellow-traveller had counselled him. He sprinkled the Princess's brow three times with the first feather, and she uttered a loud shriek, and was transformed into a coal-black swan with fiery-red eyes. He sprinkled the black swan with the second feather, whereupon it became pure white, excepting one black ring encircling its slender throat. He steeped the third feather, and shook the drops three times over the white swan's head, and forthwith the swan was gone, and his own beloved and lovely Princess, nay, a thousand times lovelier than ever, stood in its place, her cheeks glowing, her eyes sparkling so brightly, so meekly, and shedding tears of joy and thankfulness.

She now told him that, wandering alone a few years back near the weird mountain, the evening hour, when evil spirits hold their sway, came on. She was surprised by the mountain-troll within his domain, and in his own hour. He cast his wicked spells upon her, to make her serve his cruel purposes, and so potent were those spells that not even the death of the troll himself could entirely release her from them. Again and again she thanked Hans for having freed her from their hateful enchantments.

The good old King and all his court rejoiced yet more after this change. Presently Hans's fellow-traveller, his wandering-staff in his hand, and his knapsack on his back, came to the palace to ask for Hans. Hans embraced him very eagerly, entreating him to stay always with him and share in his great happiness.

But his fellow-traveller shook his head, saying, very kindly and mildly, "No, that cannot be; my time is up. I have now paid my debt. Rememberest thou not the dead man whom his evil-minded creditors would not have suffered to rest in his coffin? Thou didst give all thy substance to secure him peace and rest. I am that same dead man!"

And in the same moment he was gone.

The bridal festivities lasted for a whole month. Hans and his fair Princess loved each other dearly, and the good old King lived through many happy days, and delighted in nothing so much as in his tiny grandchildren, who used to play with his bright sceptre, and "Ride-a-cock-horse to Banbury Cross" on his knees.

But Hans, in the course of time, ruled over the whole country, and became a great and powerful monarch.

## THE LEAPING MATCH

THE flea, the grasshopper, and the frog once wanted to try which of them could jump highest; so they invited the whole world, and anybody else who liked to come and see the grand sight. Three famous jumpers were they, as was seen by every one when they met together in the room.

"I will give my daughter to him who shall jump highest," said the King; "it would be too bad for you to have the trouble of jumping, and for us to offer you no prize."

The flea was the first to introduce himself;

he had such polite manners, and bowed to the company on every side, for he was of noble blood ; besides, he was accustomed to the society of man, which had been a great advantage to him.

Next came the grasshopper ; he was not quite so slightly and elegantly formed as the flea ; however, he knew perfectly well how to conduct himself, and wore a green uniform, which belonged to him by right of birth.

Moreover, he declared himself to have sprung from a very ancient and honourable Egyptian family, and that in his present home he was very highly esteemed, so much so, indeed, that he had been taken out of the field and out into a card-house three storeys high, built on purpose for him, and all of court-cards, the coloured sides being turned inwards. As for the doors and windows in his house, they were cut out of the body of the Queen of Hearts.

"And I can sing so well," added he, "that sixteen parlour-bred crickets, who have chirped and chirped ever since they were born, and yet could never get anybody to build them a card-house, after hearing me, have fretted themselves ten times thinner than ever, out of sheer envy and vexation !"

Both the flea and the grasshopper knew excellently well how to make the most of themselves, and each considered himself quite an equal match for a princess.

The frog said not a word ; however, it might be that he thought the more, and the house-dog, after going snuffling about him, confessed that the frog must be of a good family. And the old councillor, who in vain received three orders to

hold his tongue, declared that the dog must be gifted with the spirit of prophecy, for that one could read on his back whether there was to be a severe or a mild winter, which, to be sure, is more than can be read on the back of the man who writes the weather almanac.

"Ah, I say nothing for the present!" remarked the old King, "but I observe everything, and form my own private opinion thereupon." And now the match began. The flea jumped so high that no one could see what had become of him, and so they insisted that he had not jumped at all, which was disgraceful, after he had made such a fuss!

The grasshopper only jumped half as high, but he jumped right into the King's face, and the King declared he was quite disgusted by his rudeness.

The frog stood still as if lost in thought; at last people fancied he did not intend to jump at all.

"I'm afraid he is ill!" said the dog; and he went snuffing at him again, when lo! all at once he made a little sidelong jump into the lap of the Princess, who was sitting on a low stool close by.

Then spoke the King: "There is nothing higher than my daughter, therefore he who jumps up to her jumps highest; but only a person of good understanding would ever have thought of that, and thus the frog has shown us that he has understanding. He has brains in his head, that he has!"

And thus the frog won the Princess.

"I jumped highest for all that!" exclaimed the flea. "But it's all the same to me; let her

have the stiff-legged, slimy creature, if she like him ! I jumped highest, but I am too light and airy for this stupid world ; the people can neither see me nor catch me ; dullness and heaviness win the day with them ! ”

And so the flea went into foreign service, where, it is said, he was killed.

And the grasshopper sat on a green bank, meditating on the world and its goings on, and at length he repeated the flea's last words—“Yes, dullness and heaviness win the day ! dullness and heaviness win the day ! ” And then he again began singing his own peculiar, melancholy song, and it is from him that we have learned this history ; and yet, my friend, though you read it here in a printed book, it may not be perfectly true.

## THE ROSE ELF *Fairy*

IN the centre of a large garden there grew a rose-tree, full of lovely roses, and in one of these, the loveliest of all, dwelt a little elf ; he was so very, very little that no human eye could see him. He had a bower behind each rose-petal ; he was fair and slender, as only a child can be, and had wings that reached from his shoulders down to his feet.

Oh, how fragrant were his chambers, and how bright and transparent their walls ! They were formed by delicate, pale-coloured rose-leaves.

He spent the whole day in basking in the warm sunshine, flying from flower to flower, dancing

on the butterfly's wings, and reckoning how many steps it took him to run over all the roads and footpaths of a single lime-leaf. For what we call the veins of the leaf were to him roads and footpaths, and the journey seemed almost endless. The sun set before he had ended his task ; he had set off too late.

It now grew very cold ; the dew fell fast, the wind blew, the best thing he could do was to make haste home. But though he did make all possible haste, the roses were all closed before he could reach them, and he could not get in—not a single rose was open. The poor little elf was greatly terrified ; he had never before been out in the night air, and had always slumbered sweetly behind the warm rose-leaves. Oh, it would certainly be the death of him.

At the other end of the garden he knew that there was an arbour of honeysuckles, whose flowers looked like great painted horns ; he resolved to get into one of these, and sleep there till morning. Accordingly, he flew to the spot.

But hush ! there were two persons in the arbour—a young handsome man, and a most beautiful girl. They sat close together, wishing that they might never part again all their lives long ; they loved each other so much, more than the best child in the world can love his father and mother.

“And yet we must part !” said the young man. “Thy brother does not care about our happiness, and therefore he sends me far, far away over the mountains, and across the wide ocean. Farewell, my sweet bride, for surely thou art my bride !”



And they embraced each other, and the young girl wept, and gave him a rose. But before giving it to him, she impressed upon it a kiss so warm that the flower opened ; upon which the little elf immediately flew in and leaned his head against the delicate, fragrant walls.

He could hear distinctly the words, " Farewell, farewell ! " and he felt that the rose was placed in the young man's bosom. Oh, how violently the heart throbbed within ! The little elf could not sleep at all for hearing the throbbing.

The rose was not suffered to remain long in its warm resting-place ; the man soon took it out, and while he was walking alone through the dark wood, he kissed the flower so often and so vehemently, that our tiny elf was well-nigh squeezed to death. He could feel through the rose-leaves how the man's lips were burning, and the rose opened more and more, just as if the hot mid-day sun were shining upon it.

But there came another man through the wood, looking gloomy and wrathful ; it was the beautiful young girl's wicked brother. He drew out a sharp knife, and while the young lover was kissing the rose, he stabbed him to death, cut off his head, and buried both head and body in the moist earth under a lime-tree.

" Now he is dead, and we are rid of him ! " thought the wicked brother ; " he will never come back again. He was to have taken a long journey over the mountains and beyond the sea. Men often lose their lives travelling as he has done ! He will never come back again, and my sister dare not question me about him."

So he shoved with his foot some withered leaves

over the upturned earth, and then walked home amid the shades of night. But he did not go alone, as he imagined ; the tiny elf went with him, sitting rolled up in a withered lime-leaf which had fallen into the wicked man's hair while he was digging the grave. The man put on his hat, and then it was so dark for our little elf, who was underneath, trembling with horror and indignation at the shameful deed he had witnessed.

By the morning the wicked man had reached his home ; he took off his hat, and went into his sister's sleeping-room. The bright and beautiful girl lay dreaming of him whom she loved so well, and who, she imagined, was now wandering far away across mountain and forest.

Her wicked brother bent over her with a hideous, devilish smile, the withered leaf fell out of his hair upon the counterpane, but he did not notice it, and went away, intending to sleep a little while himself.

The elf now glided out of the withered leaf, crept into the ear of the sleeping girl, and told her, as though in a dream, all about the horrible murder of her lover. He described to her the spot where her brother had buried the corpse, close under the lime-tree, and added : " In token that all that I have told thee is not a mere dream, thou shalt find a withered leaf upon thy bed when thou awakest ! "

Oh, what bitter tears she shed when she awoke and actually found the withered lime-leaf on her bed ! But she dared not speak to any one of her great affliction. The window was left open all day, so the little elf could easily have flown out

to the roses and other flowers in the garden ; however, he could not find it in his heart to leave one who was so unhappy.

A monthly rose-tree stood at the window ; he got into one of its flowers, and sat looking at the poor girl. Her brother often came into the room, and seemed very merry, but she dared not speak a word to him of her heart's sorrow.

As soon as it was night she stole out of the house, and, going to the wood, to the place where the lime-tree grew, she swept away the dry leaves, and dug in the earth till she found the corpse of the murdered man. Oh, how she wept and prayed our Lord that she, too, might die !

Gladly would she have taken the corpse home with her, but that she could not do ; so she took up the head, kissed the pale, cold lips and closed eyes, and shook the earth out of the beautiful hair.

" This I will keep ! " said she, and she cut off one rich, dark tress ; then, covering the dead body afresh with earth, she returned home, taking with her the lock of hair, and also a little bough from a jasmine-tree that blossomed near the grave. When she reached home, she fetched the largest flower-pot she could find, put into it the lock of dark hair, covered it over with mould, and planted the slip of jasmine above it.

" Farewell, farewell ! " whispered the little elf, who could no longer bear to witness so much misery, and flew into the garden to his own rose. But he found it was faded by this time ; only a few pale leaves were still clinging to the green calyx. " Alas ! how quickly does everything good and beautiful pass away ! " sighed the elf. At last he found a rose that would suit for

his home, and laid himself down among its fragrant petals.

And from henceforth he flew every morning to the window of the poor girl's room, and every morning he found her standing over the flower-pot weeping. Her salt tears fell upon the jasmine, and day by day, as she grew paler and paler, the plant grew fresher and greener ; one little shoot after another pushed forth, and the delicate white buds unfolded into flowers. And she kissed the flowers ; but her wicked brother mocked her, and asked her if she had lost her wits. He could not conceive why she was incessantly weeping over that jasmine.

One day she leaned her head against the flower-pot and fell asleep, and while she was sleeping thus, the little rose-elf flew into the room. He crept into her ear, and repeated to her the conversation he had heard in the arbour on that sad evening ; described to her the sweet smelling rose, and told of the love that the flower-spirits bore her.

She dreamed very sweetly, and while she was dreaming, her life departed ; she died a quiet, peaceful death. She was now at perfect rest with him whom she had loved so dearly.

And the blossoms of the jasmine opened their large white bells, and sent forth a fragrance wondrously sweet and strong ; this was the way in which they could bewail the dead.

But the wicked brother noticed the beautiful, blooming tree and its delicious odour, and, considering it now his property, he took it away into his sleeping-room and placed it near the bed. The little rose-elf followed it, flew from flower

to flower, for in each flower there dwelt a little spirit, and to each he told of the murdered young man whose glossy hair lay in the mould under their root, told them of the wicked brother and the heart-broken sister.

"We know it!" replied all the spirits of the flowers; "we know it! Have not we sprung forth from the rich dark tresses of the dead? We know it; we know it!" and they all nodded their heads in the strangest manner.

The rose-elf could not conceive how they could take it so quietly, and he flew away to the bees, who were gathering honey in the garden, and told the story to them. And the bees told their Queen, and she gave orders that next morning they should all go and kill the murderer.

That very same night, however—it was the first night after his sister's death—while the brother was asleep in the bed near which the jasmine-tree was placed, each little flower-cup opened, and out flew the flower-spirits, invisible, but armed each with a poisoned arrow. They first crept into his ear and made him dream of his sinful deed, and then flew through his parted lips, and stabbed him in the tongue with their poisonous shafts.

"Now we have avenged the dead!" said they; and they flew back into the white jasmine-cups.

After day had dawned, the bedroom window being suddenly flung open the rose-elf flew in, followed by the Queen-bee and her whole swarm; they had come to sting the murderer to death. But he was already dead; some persons were standing round the bed, declaring, "The strong scent of the jasmines has killed him!"

The rose-elf then understood that the flower-spirits had taken vengeance on the murderer. He explained it to the Queen-bee, and she, with her whole swarm, buzzed round the flower-pot in token of approval. In vain did people try to drive them off. At last a man took up the flower-pot, intending to carry it away, upon which one of the bees stung him in the hand, so that the pot fell to the ground and broke in pieces.

All who were present then saw the beautiful curling hair of the murdered youth, and guessed that the dead man in the bed must be a murderer.

And the Queen-bee flew buzzing about in the garden, singing of the vengeance of the flowers of the rose-elf, and how that behind the tiniest leaf there lurks a spirit who knows when crime is committed, and can punish the evil-doer.

## THE FLYING TRUNK

THERE was once a merchant, so rich that he might have paved the whole street where he lived, and an alley besides, with pieces of silver, but this he did not do ; he knew another way of using his money, and whenever he laid out a shilling he gained a crown in return. A merchant he lived, and a merchant he died.

All his money then went to his son. But the son lived merrily, and spent all his time in pleasures—went to masquerades every evening, made bank-notes into paper kites, and played at ducks and drakes in the pond with gold pieces instead of stones.



In this manner his money soon vanished, until at last he had only a few pennies left, and his wardrobe was reduced to a pair of slippers and an old dressing-gown. His friends cared no more about him, now that they could no longer walk abroad with him ; one of them, however, more good-natured than the rest, sent him an old trunk, with this advice, " Pack up, and be off ! " This was all very fine, but he had nothing that he could pack up ; so he put himself into the trunk.

It was a droll trunk : when the lock was pressed close it could fly. The merchant's son did press the lock, and lo ! up flew the trunk with him through the chimney, high into the clouds, on and on, higher and higher. The lower part cracked, which rather frightened him, for if it had broken in two, a pretty fall he would have had.

However, it descended safely, and he found himself in Turkey. He hid the trunk under a heap of dry leaves in a wood, and walked into the next town. He could do so very well, for among the Turks everybody goes about clad as he was, in dressing-gown and slippers. He met a nurse carrying a little child in her arms. " Hark ye, Turkish nurse," quoth he ; " what palace is that with the high windows close by the town ? "

" The King's daughter dwells there," replied the nurse. " It has been told of her that she shall be made very unhappy by a lover, and therefore no one may visit her, except when the King and Queen are with her."

" Thank you," said the merchant's son, and he immediately went back into the wood, sat down

in his trunk, flew up to the roof of the palace, and crept through the window into the Princess's apartment.

She was lying asleep on the sofa. She was so beautiful that the merchant's son could not help kneeling down to kiss her hand, whereupon she awoke, and was not a little frightened at the sight of this unexpected visitor. But he told her, however, that he was the Turkish prophet, and had come down from the sky on purpose to woo her, and on hearing this she was well pleased.

So they sat down side by side, and he talked to her about her eyes, how they were beautiful dark-blue seas, and that thoughts and feelings floated like mermaidens therein ; and he spoke of her brow, how it was a fair snowy mountain, with splendid halls and pictures, and many other such like things he told her.

Oh, these were charming stories : and thus he wooed the Princess, and she immediately said " Yes."

" But you must come here on Saturday," said she ; " the King and Queen have promised to drink tea with me that evening ; they will be so proud and so pleased when they hear that I am to marry the Turkish prophet ! And mind you tell them a very pretty story, for they are exceedingly fond of stories. My mother likes them to be very moral and high-class, and my father likes them to be merry, so as to make him laugh."

" Yes, I shall bring no other bridal present than a tale," replied the merchant's son ; and here they parted, but not before the Princess had given her lover a sabre all covered with gold. He

knew excellently well what use to make of this present.

So he flew away, bought a new dressing-gown, and then sat down in the wood to compose the tale which was to be ready by Saturday, and certainly, he found composition not the easiest thing in the world.

At last he was ready, and at last Saturday came.

The King, the Queen, and the whole court were waiting tea for him at the Princess's palace. The suitor was received with much ceremony.

"Will you not tell us a story?" asked the Queen; "a story that is instructive and full of deep meaning."

"But let it make us laugh," said the King.

"With pleasure," replied the merchant's son; and now you must hear his story.

"There was once a bundle of matches, who were all extremely proud of their high descent, for their genealogical tree—that is to say, the tall fir-tree from which each of them was a splinter—had been a tree of great antiquity, and distinguished by his height from all the other trees of the forest. The matches were now lying on the mantelpiece, between a tinder-box and an old iron saucepan, and to these two they often talked about their youth.

"Ah, when we were upon the green branches," said they; "when we really lived upon green branches—that was a happy time! Every morning and evening we had diamond-tea" (that is dew); "the whole day long we had sunshine, at least whenever the sun shone, and all the little birds used to tell stories to us. It might easily be seen, too, that we were rich, for the

other trees were clothed with leaves only during the summer, whereas our family could afford to wear green clothes both summer and winter.

“ ‘But at last came the wood-cutters : then was the great revolution, and our family was dispersed. The paternal trunk obtained a situation as mainmast to a magnificent ship, which could sail round the world if it chose ; the boughs were transported to various places, and our vocation was henceforth to kindle lights for low, common people. Now you will understand how it comes to pass that persons of such high descent as we are should be living in a kitchen.’

“ ‘To be sure, mine is a very different history,’ remarked the iron saucepan, near which the matches were lying. ‘From the moment I came into the world until now, I have been rubbed and scrubbed, and boiled over and over again—oh, how many times ! I love to have to do with what is solidly good, and am really of the first importance in this house.

“ ‘My only recreation is to stand clean and bright upon this mantelpiece after dinner, and hold some rational conversation with my companions. However, excepting the water-pail, who now and then goes out into the court, we all of us lead a very quiet domestic life here. Our only newsmonger is the turf-basket, but he talks in such a democratic way about “government” and the “people”—why, I assure you, not long ago, there was an old jar standing here who was so much shocked by what he heard said that he fell down from the mantelpiece and broke into a thousand pieces ! That turf-basket is a Liberal, that’s the fact.’

“ ‘Now, you talk too much,’ interrupted the tinder-box ; and the steel struck the flint, so that the sparks flew out. ‘Why should we not spend a pleasant evening ?’

“ ‘Yes, let us settle who is of highest rank among us !’ proposed the matches.

“ ‘Oh no ; for my part I would rather not speak of myself,’ objected the earthenware pitcher. ‘Suppose we have an intellectual entertainment ? I will begin ; I will relate something of every-day life, such as we have all experienced ; one can easily transport one’s self into it, and that is so interesting ! Near the Baltic, among the Danish beech-groves——’

“ ‘That is a capital beginning !’ cried all the plates at once ; ‘it will certainly be just the sort of story for me !’

“ ‘Yes, there I spent my youth in a very quiet family ; the furniture was rubbed, the floors were washed, clean curtains were hung up every fortnight.’

“ ‘How very interesting. What a charming way you have of describing things !’ said the hair-broom. ‘Any one might guess immediately that it is a lady who is speaking ; the tale breathes such a spirit of cleanliness !’

“ ‘Very true ; so it does !’ exclaimed the water-pail ; and in the excess of his delight he gave a little jump, so that some of the water splashed upon the floor.

“ And the pitcher went on with her tale, and the end proved as good as the beginning.

“ All the plates clattered applause, and the hair-broom took some green parsley out of the sand-hole and crowned the pitcher, for he knew

that this would vex the others ; and, thought he, 'If I crown her to-day, she will crown me to-morrow.'

" 'Now I will dance,' said the fire-tongs, and accordingly she did dance, and oh ! it was wonderful to see how high she threw one of her legs up into the air ; the old chair-cover in the corner tore with horror at seeing her. 'Am not I to be crowned too ?' asked the tongs ; and she was crowned forthwith.

" 'These are the vulgar rabble !' thought the matches.

"The tea-urn was now called upon to sing, but she had a cold ; she said she could only sing when she was boiling ; however, this was all her pride and affectation. The fact was she never cared to sing except when she was standing on the parlour table before company.

"On the window-ledge lay an old quill pen, with which the maids used to write ; there was nothing remarkable about her, except that she had been dipped too low in the ink ; however, she was proud of that. 'If the tea-urn does not choose to sing,' quoth she, 'she may let it alone ; there is a nightingale in the cage hung just outside, he can sing. To be sure, he had never learned the notes ; never mind—we will not speak evil of any one this evening !'

" 'I think it highly absurd,' observed the tea-kettle, who was the vocalist of the kitchen, and a half-brother of the tea-urn's, 'that a foreign bird should be listened to. Is it patriotic ? I appeal to the turf-basket.'

" 'I am only vexed,' said the turf-basket ; 'I am vexed from my inmost soul that such



things are thought of at all. Is it a becoming way of spending the evening? Would it not be much more rational to reform the whole house, and establish a totally new order of things, rather more according to nature? Then every one would get into his right place, and I would undertake to direct the revolution. What say you to it? That would be something worth the doing!

"Oh yes; we will make a grand commotion!" cried they all. Just then the door opened—it was the servant-maid. They all stood perfectly still, not one dared stir; yet there was not a single kitchen-utensil among them all but was thinking about the great things he could have done, and how great was his superiority over the others.

"Ah, if I had chosen it," thought each of them, "what a merry evening we might have had!"

"The maid took the matches and struck a light—oh, how they sputtered and blazed up!"

"Now every one may see," thought they, "that we are of highest rank. What a splendid, dazzling light we give—how glorious!" and in another moment they were burned out."

"That is a capital story," said the Queen; "I quite felt myself transported into the kitchen. Yes, thou shalt have our daughter!"

"With all my heart," said the King; "on Monday thou shalt marry our daughter." They said "thou" to him now, since he was so soon to become one of the family.

The wedding was a settled thing; and on the evening preceding, the whole city was illumi-

nated ; cakes, buns, and sugar-plums were thrown out among the people ; all the little boys in the streets stood upon tip-toes, shouting " Hurrah ! " and whistling through their fingers—it was famous !

" Well, I suppose I ought to do my part, too," thought the merchant's son ; so he went and bought sky-rockets, squibs, Catherine-wheels, Roman-candles, and all kinds of fireworks conceivable ; put them all into his trunk, and flew up into the air, letting them off as he flew.

Hurrah ! what a glorious sky-rocket was that !

All the Turks jumped up to look so hastily that their slippers flew about their ears ; such a meteor they had never seen before. Now they might be sure that it was indeed the prophet who was to marry their Princess.

As soon as the merchant's son had returned in his trunk to the wood, he said to himself, " I will now go into the city and hear what people say about me, and what sort of figure I made in the air ; " and, certainly, this was a very natural idea.

Oh, what strange accounts were given ! Every one whom he accosted had beheld the bright vision in a way peculiar to himself, but all agreed that it was marvellously beautiful.

" I saw the great prophet with my own eyes," declared one ; " he had eyes like sparkling stars, and a beard like foaming water."

" He flew enveloped in a mantle of fire," said another, " the prettiest little cherubs were peeping forth from under its folds."

Yes ; he heard of many beautiful things, and the morrow was to be his wedding-day.

He now went back to the wood, intending to get into his trunk again, but where was it?

Alas! the trunk was burned. One spark from the fireworks had been left in it, and set it on fire; the trunk now lay in ashes. The poor merchant's son could never fly again—could never again visit his bride.

She sat the livelong day upon the roof of her palace expecting him; she expects him still. He, meantime, goes about the world telling stories, but none of his stories now are so pleasant as that one which he related in the Princess's palace about the Brimstone Matches.

## THE OLD STREET LAMP

HAVE you never heard the history of the old street lamp? Not that it is so extraordinarily entertaining, but I think it will bear telling just for once.

A decent, respectable old street lamp was the one of which I speak; for many, many years she had done good service, but was now to be cashiered. For the very last evening she sat on the lamp-post, giving light to the street, and she felt very much as a superannuated ballet-dancer feels when she is dancing for the last time, and knows that to-morrow, and ever after, she will sit alone in her attic chamber, morning, noon, and night, unthought of and uncared for by the generous public.

Our lamp felt just such a horror of the coming day, for she knew that she would then be taken,

for the first time in her life, into the council-room, to be surveyed by the "six-and-thirty men" of the town council, in order that they might decide whether she was or was not any longer fit for service.

Then, too, would it be determined whether she should be sent out to one of the bridges to give light there, or, into the country, to one of the manufactories, or, perhaps, to an iron foundry, to be melted down and made into something new. And this last probability was especially painful to her, for she feared that if she were made into something new she would retain no recollection of ever having been a street lamp.

Besides, whatever became of her, she was sure to be separated from the watchman and his wife, whom she had known so long that she had learned to consider herself one of their family. The watchman had been made a watchman just at the very same time that she was made a lamp. His wife was somewhat proud and crotchety in those days; only when she passed the street lamp of an evening did she deign to throw a glance up at her—never by day.

Now, on the contrary, in these latter years, when all three—watchman, wife, and lamp—had grown old, the wife had become more friendly, had often cleaned out the lamp and given her fresh oil. Very honourable people were this man and wife; they had never cheated the lamp of a single drop that was her due.

It was her last night in the street, and tomorrow she must go into the council-room; these were two gloomy thoughts for the lamp,

and, naturally enough, she burned with a dimmed and feeble light.

But other thoughts besides these passed across her ; she had shone upon so many things, she had seen so much, perhaps as much as the "six-and-thirty men" ; although she never would have said so, for she was a really modest, decorous old lantern, and would, on no account, have given offence to any one, least of all to her superiors.

She remembered so much, and, in the midst of her recollections, her flame suddenly blazed up high as if she were thinking, "Yes, and there are a few, too, who will remember me. There was, for instance, that handsome young man—ah ! it is many years ago now—who came with a letter in his hand. It was written on rose-coloured paper, so pretty, so delicate, and with gilt edges, and it was in a lady's handwriting ; he read the letter twice over, and then kissed it, and looked up at me, and his two eyes seemed to say, 'I am the very happiest man in the world !' Ah, only he and I knew what was written in that first letter from his betrothed bride.

"And I remember well seeing two other eyes : it is strange how thoughts spring up in one. There was a splendid funeral passing through the street ; such a beautiful young lady lay in her coffin inside the carriage ; wreaths of flowers were thrown upon the coffin, and so many bright torches were there in the procession that my dim light was quite put out by them. A great crowd of people followed the procession, but after they were all passed by, and the torches were out of sight, and I looked around me, I saw some one

standing by the post weeping. Never shall I forget those two sorrowful eyes that then glanced up at me ! ”

Thus many different thoughts passed across the old street lamp on her last evening of public service. The sentinel upon guard, when he is relieved, at least knows his successor, and can exchange a few words with him, but the lamp knew not who was to take her place, and thus could not, as otherwise she might have done, give him one or two useful hints concerning rain and sleet, or show how far the moonlight was wont to spread over the pavement, or from what side the wind blew.

On the gutter-board stood three candidates for the vacant office ; they had presented themselves to the lamp, under the idea that she would have to appoint her own successor.

The first of these was a herring's head, which you know, shines in the dark, and this herring's head was of opinion that his being elevated to the lamp-post would be a great saving of oil.

The second was a piece of tinder, which, as it declared, shone brighter in the dark than a stock-fish even ; besides, it was a fragment from a tree that had once been the glory and pride of the forest.

The third candidate was a glow-worm. How she had got there the lamp could not conceive ; however, there she was, and glittering very prettily, but the herring's head and the piece of tinder were both ready to take their oaths that she could shine only at certain times, and that, consequently, she was quite out of the question.

The old lamp explained that not one of them



gave sufficient light to be fit to take her place, but this none of the three would believe ; and so, when they heard that it was not for the lamp to choose her successor, they said that they were very glad of it, for that she was too much decayed to be able to choose with judgment.

Just then the wind came rushing round the corner of the street ; he blew through the smoke-cowl upon the old lantern, exclaiming, " What is this that I hear ? That thou wilt really leave us to-morrow ? Is this actually the last evening that I shall meet thee here ? Well, if it must be so, I will at least make thee a parting gift. I will blow into thy brain-pan, so that not only shalt thou remember clearly and plainly whatever thou hast seen and heard, but whenever anything is told or read aloud in thy presence, thou shalt be so clear-headed as to see it as in a picture ! "

" Ah, that is a valuable gift, indeed ! " replied the old street lamp. " Many thanks !—if only I am not melted down ! "

" We must hope that will not happen, " said the wind. " And now I blow this faculty into thee ; if thou canst get many such gifts thou mayest still enjoy a comfortable old age. "

" If only I am not melted down ! " sighed the lamp. " Or canst thou, perhaps, even in that case, secure me my memory ? "

" Old lantern, be reasonable ! " exhorted the wind, and again he blew. And now the moon stepped forth from the clouds. " What will you give ? " inquired the wind.

" I shall give just nothing at all ! " was her reply. " I am now on the wane, and lanterns have never shone for me, long as I have shone for

lanterns." And accordingly the moon retired behind the clouds again, for she was determined not to be plagued into giving anything.

Presently a drop of water fell down upon the cover of the lamp ; it was like a drop from a roof, but it declared that it came from the grey clouds, and was sent as a gift, perhaps the very best gift imaginable.

"I penetrate into thee, so as to enable thee in one thing, if thou should'st wish it, to become rusty, and thus fall to pieces and return to dust." But to the lamp this seemed a miserable gift, and so seemed it to the wind.

"Has no one a better—has no one a better to offer?" whistled he as loud as he could ; and in that moment there fell a bright shooting star, glittering in a long trail down the air.

"What was that?" cried the herring's head. "Was that a star falling down? I verily believe it went into the lamp! Well, to be sure, if the office is sought by people of such very high station as that, we had better give up the idea of it!" And so he did, and the two other candidates did the same. But the lamp suddenly flared up so high and bright.

"That was a charming gift!" said she. "The brilliant stars above, whom I have always delighted in so much, and who shine so beautifully, as I have never been able to shine, although it has been the grand aim and effort of my life so to do—those brilliant, beaming stars have taken heed of me, a poor old lantern, and have sent one down to me with a rare gift, so that in future all that I can myself remember and see so plainly shall also be seen by those whom I love—a

precious gift, indeed, for every enjoyment that cannot be shared with another is only half an enjoyment."

"Very rightly thought; the sentiment does thee honour!" said the wind. "It seems, though, thou dost not know that unless a wax-candle is lighted inside thee, no one will be able to see any pictures through thy means. But the stars never thought of that; they imagine that everything that shines here below has at least one wax-candle in it. But now I am right weary," added the wind; "I will lay myself down to rest a little while." And so he lay down to rest.

Next day—but we may as well pass over the next day. Next evening the lamp lay in an arm-chair, and where?—in the old watchman's room.

He had begged of the "six-and-thirty men," in consideration of his long and faithful services, to be allowed to keep the old lamp for his own; they laughed at his odd request, and gave it him; and so now the lamp lay in the arm-chair, close by the warm stove, and she seemed to have grown so much larger as nearly to fill the great arm-chair. And the old people were sitting at supper, and every now and then they threw a kind, friendly glance at the old lamp, as if they would gladly have given her a place at the table.

The room wherein they dwelt was properly a cellar; however, it was tolerably warm and comfortable, and very clean and neat; the door was bound round with list, there were curtains to the bedstead and the little windows, and on the window ledges stood two such strange-looking flower-pots. Neighbour Christian, the sailor,

had brought them home from the Indies—whether from the East or the West the old people did not know. They were two earthenware elephants, without back, and hollow inside, and out of the mould with which they were filled sprang up from one of them the most delicate young leeks—that was their kitchen-garden; from the other a large geranium full of blossoms—that was their flower-garden. On the wall hung a large coloured print of “The Congress at Vienna”—there were seen kings and emperors both, all so grand! A clock, with heavy leaden weights, kept up an incessant “tick, tick”; it always went too fast, but that was better than going too slow, at least so said the old folks. And they ate their evening meal, and the old street lamp, as before said, lay in the arm-chair close by the warm stove, and she felt as though she were ruthlessly tossed hither and thither amid the wide world. But when the old watchman looked at her, and began to talk of what they two had lived through together, in moonlight and darkness, in rain and in mist, in the bright, brief summer nights, and in the long, severe hours of winter, when the snow-flakes drifted thickly about them, and he was so glad to get back to the shelter of his cellar-home; then, while he talked thus, all was right again with the old lamp, for she saw all he spoke of, and she knew that the wind had not deceived her.

They were so brisk and busy, these old people; not a single hour of theirs was ever dozed or dawdled away. On Sunday afternoons some book or other always was brought forward, generally a book of travels, and the old man would read

aloud about Africa, about its vast forest and the wild elephants that roamed at large among them, and the old woman would listen so attentively, and cast a look at the earthenware elephants that served her as flower-pots. "Yes, I can almost fancy that!" she would say. And the lamp wished so fervently that a wax-candle were lighted and put inside her, for then the good old woman would actually see the whole scene pictured visibly before her, just as the lamp saw it—the tall trees, with their thickly-leaved, intertwining boughs, the naked black men on horseback, and whole herds of elephants—reeds and underwood breaking and crackling under their broad feet.

"What can all my rare gifts avail, when no wax-candle is lit within me!" sighed the lamp. "They have nothing but train-oil and tallow-candles, and neither of those will do."

One day, however, a number of wax-candle-ends were brought into the cellar; the larger pieces were burned out in the candlestick, and the smaller ones the old woman used to wax her thread with when she was at work. This was worse than ever! Here were wax-candles in plenty, and no one ever thought of putting one little piece into the lamp.

"So here I stand with all my rare gifts!" thought the lamp. "I see so many charming pictures pass before me, but I may never share the enjoyment with you, my friends. Alas! you do not know that I can change these bare, white walls to the richest tapestry, to glorious, leafy woods, to everything that you can desire to see—alas! you know it not!"

The lamp was continually being rubbed clean, and in the corner where it stood it was so placed that every one's eye fell upon it. People truly, enough, called it a piece of old rubbish, but the old couple cared nothing for that; they loved it.

One day—it was the old watchman's birthday—his wife came up to the lamp saying, with a smile, "I will get up a little illumination in his honour," and the lamp's iron hat cracked, for she thought, "now then I shall have a wax-candle!" But oil, not wax, was given her; she burned all the evening long, and she now felt sure that the gift the stars had given her, the best gift of all, must needs remain a hidden treasure, as far as this present life was concerned. Then she dreamed—for a lamp so highly gifted as she was must surely be able to dream—she dreamed that the old people were dead, and that she herself had been carried to an iron foundry to be melted down. Very much frightened was she, as frightened as when she was taken into the council-room to be examined by the "six-and-thirty men"; and yet, although she knew she had the power of becoming rust and dust if she chose, she did not choose it. And so it came to pass that she was cast into the furnace, and became a most beautiful little iron candlestick, intended to hold wax-tapers, and wax-tapers only; it was in the form of an angel holding a bouquet of flowers, and in the centre of the bouquet the wax-candle was placed, and the candlestick itself was set on a green writing-desk. And the room around it was such a pretty room; books were scattered about, and beautiful pic-



tures hung upon the walls—it was a poet's room, and all that he imagined and wrote about seemed whirling round, the chamber becoming now a deep, gloomy forest—now a sunlit plain, scattered with hamlets, the stork striding about on his long legs—now a stately ship, tossing high on the waves of the heaving ocean. “Oh, what rare gifts are mine!” thought the old lamp, when she awoke. “Almost could I long to be melted down!—but no, that must not be while the old folks live. They love me for my own sake, I am like their child to them, and they have rubbed me clean and given me fresh oil for so many years, and I am as well off here, and as honoured as ‘The Congress at Vienna.’ I ought certainly to be contented with my lot!”

And from henceforth she had more inward peace, and surely this respectable old street lamp deserved to be at peace—don't you think she did?

## THE LITTLE MATCH-GIRL

It was dreadfully cold; it was snowing fast, and almost dark; the evening—the last evening of the old year—was drawing in. But, cold and dark as it was, a poor little girl, with bare head and feet, was still wandering about the streets.

When she left her home she had slippers on, but they were much too large for her—indeed, properly, they belonged to her mother—and had dropped off her feet while she was running very fast across the road, to get out of the way of two carriages. One of the slippers was not to be

found ; the other had been snatched up by a little boy, who ran off with it, thinking it might serve him as a doll's cradle.

So the little girl now walked on, her bare feet red and blue with the cold. She carried a small bundle of matches in her hand, and a good many more in her tattered apron. No one had bought any of them the livelong day—no one had given her a single penny. Trembling with cold and hunger crept she on, the picture of sorrow—poor little child !

The snow-flakes fell on her long fair hair, which curled in such pretty ringlets over her shoulders ; but she did not think of her own beauty, or of the cold. Lights were glimmering through every window, and the savour of roast goose reached her from several houses ; it was New Year's Eve, and it was of this that she thought.

In a corner formed by two houses, one of which projected beyond the other, she sat down, drawing her little feet close under her, but in vain—she could not warm them. She dared not go home ; she had sold no matches, earned not a single penny, and perhaps her father would beat her. Besides, her home was almost as cold as the street, for it was an attic ; and, although the larger of the many chinks in the roof were stopped up with straw and rags, the wind and snow often penetrated through.

Her hands were nearly dead with cold ; one little match from her bundle would warm them, perhaps, if she dared light it. She drew one out, and struck it against the wall. Bravo ! it was a bright, warm flame, and she held her hands over

it. It was quite an illumination for that poor little girl ; nay, call it rather a magic taper, for it seemed to her as if she were sitting before a large iron stove with brass ornaments, so beautifully blazed the fire within ! The child stretched out her feet to warm them also. Alas ! in an instant the flame had died away ; the stove vanished ; the little girl sat cold and comfortless, with the burnt match in her hand.

A second match was struck against the wall ; it kindled and blazed, and, wherever its light fell, the wall became transparent as a veil : the little girl could see into the room within. She saw the table spread with a snow-like damask cloth, on which were ranged shining china dishes. The roast goose stuffed with apples and dried plums stood at one end, smoking hot, and—which was pleasantest of all to see—the goose, with knife and fork still in her breast, jumped down from the dish, and waddled along the floor right up to the poor child.

The match was burned out, and only the thick, hard wall was beside her.

She kindled a third match. Again up shot the flame ; and now she was sitting under a most beautiful Christmas tree, far larger, and far more prettily decked out than the one she had seen last Christmas Eve through the glass doors of the rich merchant's house. Hundreds of wax-tapers lighted up the green branches, and tiny painted figures, such as she had seen in the shop windows, looked down from the tree upon her.

The child stretched out her hands towards them in delight, and in that moment the light of the match was quenched ; still, however, the

Christmas candles burned higher and higher. She beheld them beaming like stars in heaven ; one of them fell, the light streaming behind it like a long, fiery tail.

"Now some one is dying," said the little girl softly ; for she had been told by her old grandmother—the only person who had ever been kind to her, and who was now dead—that whenever a star falls an immortal spirit returns to the God who gave it. She struck yet another match against the wall ; it flamed up, and, surrounded by its light, that same dear grandmother appeared before her, gentle and loving as always, but bright and happy as she had never looked during her lifetime.

"Grandmother !" exclaimed the child. "Oh, take me with you ; I know thou wilt leave me as soon as the match goes out ; thou wilt vanish like the warm fire in the stove, like the splendid New Year's feast, like the beautiful large Christmas-tree ;" and she hastily lighted all the remaining matches in the bundle, lest her grandmother should disappear.

And the matches burned with such a blaze of splendour, that noonday could scarcely have been brighter. Never had the good old grandmother looked so tall and stately, so beautiful and kind ; she took the little girl in her arms, and they both flew together. Joyfully and gloriously they flew—higher and higher, till they were in that place where neither cold, nor hunger, nor pain, is ever known. They were in Paradise.

But in the cold morning hour, crouching in the corner of the wall, the poor little girl was found—her cheeks glowing, her lips smiling—frozen to

death on the last night of the Old Year. The New Year's sun shone on the lifeless child ; motionless she sat there with the matches in her lap, one bundle of them quite burned out.

"She has been trying to warm herself, poor thing !" the people said ; but no one knew of the sweet visions she had beheld, or how gloriously she and her grandmother were celebrating their New Year's festival.

## THE NEIGHBOURS

ANY one might have supposed that something very extraordinary had happened in the duck-pond, there was such a commotion. All the ducks—some swimming, some standing in the pond with their heads downwards—suddenly jumped on land, leaving the traces of their feet in the wet clay, and sending forth a loud startled cry.

The water, too, which had hitherto been smooth as a mirror, was now troubled. Just before, it had so calmly and clearly reflected everything around—every tree, every bush, the peasant's cottage with its gable-end full of holes, the swallow's nest beneath, and especially the large rose-tree with its branches and flowers covering the wall, and hanging almost into the water. All these had been painted on the clear surface and looked like a picture, only with every object upside down ; but now that the water was troubled, colours and forms seemed to run into each other, and the picture was spoiled.

Two feathers from the ducks' wings, which had hitherto been calmly wafted hither and thither, now took flight, as if carried away by a gust of wind, and yet not a breath was stirring. Presently they lay still, and the water also became tranquil and smooth, again reflecting, as before, the peasant's gable roof, the swallow's nest, and the large rose-tree.

Each single rose beheld itself therein ; all were beautiful, but they knew it not, for no one had ever told them so. The sun shone through their delicate petals so full of fragrance, and every rose felt just as we do when our hearts are full of untold happiness.

"How delightful it is to live here !" said each rose to herself ; "the only thing I can find to wish for is, that I could kiss the sun because he is so warm and bright. Ah ! and then, too, the roses down in the water, I would kiss them also, they are exactly like us. And I should like to kiss those dear little birds in the nest just below them ; there are some others, too, above us. They pop out their tiny heads and twitter so prettily, but they have no feathers, as their father and mother have. Ours are certainly pleasant neighbours, both above and below. Oh, how charming it is to live here !"

Now the young birds above—those below were but the reflection in the water—were sparrows. Their father and mother were sparrows also ; they had taken possession of the empty swallow's nest the year before, and were now perfectly at home in it.

"Are those the ducks' children swimming down there ?" asked the young sparrows, as



soon as they had spied out the two feathers skimming over the water.

"If you must ask questions, at least let there be some sense in them!" returned the mother. "Don't you see that they are feathers—live clothes such as I wear, and as you will some day? Only ours are of a finer quality. I wish, however, that we had those feathers up here in the nest, for they would make it warm and comfortable. I should like to know what it was that frightened the ducks just now? It must have been something in the water, for it could not be my calling to you, though I did say 'twit,' rather loudly. Those thick-headed roses might have found out what was the matter, but they know nothing and do nothing but look at themselves and scent the air. I am so weary of those neighbours of ours!"

"Listen to the sweet little birds up there!" said the roses, "they are actually trying to sing; they cannot yet, but they will in time. How pleasant that must be! It is quite amusing to have such merry neighbours!"

Now came galloping up to the water two horses with a peasant-boy upon one of them; the boy had taken off his outer garment, and wore a large, broad-brimmed, black hat on his head.

He whistled as if he, too, had been a little bird, and rode through the deepest part of the pond.

When he came up to the rose-tree he tore off one of the roses and stuck it in his hat, then, fancying himself very smart, off he rode again. The other roses looked after their lost sister, and

asked each other, "Where is she gone?" But that none of them knew.

"I should like to go out into the world," said one of the roses, "but it is very pleasant here at home in our own green branches. All day long the sun is so warm, and at night-time the sky is still more beautiful, we can then look into those little holes which it is so full of."

By the holes in the sky she meant the stars, for roses know no better.

"We are the life of the house!" said the mother of the sparrows, "and people say that a swallow's nest brings luck; so they are glad enough to have us. But as to our neighbours, such a great rose-bush as that by the wall only makes the place damp; I should think it will be rooted up soon, and then, perhaps, corn may grow there. Roses are good for nothing but for people to look at and smell, or, at most, to stick in their hats.

"And this I have heard from my mother: every year they fall to pieces, the peasant's wife collects them and strews salt over them. Then a French name is given to them, which I cannot pronounce, nor care to do so, and afterwards they are thrown into the fire to perfume the room. Such is their life; they live only to please the eyes and nose. Now you know all about them!"

As the evening advanced, and the gnats were dancing merrily in the warm atmosphere, and the clouds above looking so red and bright, the nightingale came and sang to the roses. He sang that beauty was like sunshine in the world, and that the beautiful shall live for ever. But the roses believed that the nightingale was singing

about himself, which, indeed, might have been true ; as to the song being addressed to them, of that they would never have thought. Still they were pleased with it, and wondered whether all the young sparrows would not become nightingales also in due time.

"I understand quite well what that bird was singing about," said one of the young sparrows ; "there was only one word that was not clear to me ; what does he mean by the beautiful ?"

"It is nothing !" said the mother-bird ; "it is only an appearance. At the hall, where the doves have a house of their own, and peas and grains of corn are strewn for them every day (I have dined with them, and so shall you some time or other—tell me who are thy companions and I will tell thee who thou art)—at the hall, as I said before, there are two birds with green necks and a tuft on their heads. They can spread out the tail as if it were a large wheel, and it has so many colours that one's eyes are dazzled by looking at it, that is 'the beautiful.' The birds are called peacocks ; they should just be stripped of their feathers, and then they would not look different from us and everybody else. I would have plucked them myself, had they not been so large."

"Never mind, I will pluck them, depend upon it !" said the youngest of the sparrows, who had not yet a single feather of his own.

In the cottage dwelt two young, married people ; they were cheerful and industrious, and loved each other ; so everything went on pleasantly with them. On Sunday morning the young woman went out, gathered a handful of the

loveliest among the roses, put them in a glass of water, and placed the glass upon the chest.

"Now I can see that it is Sunday !" said the husband. He kissed his fair, young wife, and they sat down hand in hand and read a psalm, while the sun shone brightly through the windows upon the fresh roses and the happy young couple.

"I am weary of looking at this !" said the mother of the sparrows, as she peeped from her nest into the room, and away she flew.

Every Sunday fresh roses were gathered to adorn the room, and yet the rose-tree blossomed none the less. The young sparrows at last had feathers of their own, and wanted to fly away with their mother ; but this she would not allow, and so they were obliged to remain in the nest. And well it was for them that they did ; for one day, not looking where she was going, she flew right into a net made of horse-hair, which some boys had fastened to a bough. The net pressed so closely round her leg that it was almost ready to break. Oh, what pain, what terror she suffered !

The boys sprang forward to secure their prey ; their grasp was cruelly hard. "It is nothing but a sparrow," said they ; but they would not let her fly again ; they took her home, and every time she cried out, they struck her on the beak.

There was an old man in the yard who used to make soap, and sell it made up into balls and pieces for hands and beards. A merry, careless old fellow he was, and a merry wandering life he led ; and when he saw the poor sparrow which the boys had caught, and which they said they

did not care about, he said to them, "Suppose we make the ugly bird beautiful!"

Mother-sparrow shivered from head to foot on hearing this, and she well might. Out of his box, which was provided with the brightest colours, the old man took a quantity of shining leaf-gold, and, having sent the boys for an egg, he smeared the white of it all over the bird, and then laid upon it the leaf-gold.

Thus mother-sparrow was gilt; but she took no pleasure in her finery; her limbs shook with fear. And the old soap-maker tore off a piece of red cloth from his jacket, cut it and clipped it to look like a cockscomb, and then stuck it on the poor bird's head.

"Now you shall see the gold bird fly," said he, letting mother-sparrow loose, and away she flew in deadly terror. Oh, how she sparkled in the sunshine! All the sparrows, even a large full-grown crow, who, at her age, ought to have been surprised at nothing, flew back quite startled and shocked at the unwonted sight; but they all soon returned, eager to discover what sort of strange bird this might be.

"Whence, and whither? Whence, and whither?" screamed the crow.

"Wait a bit! Wait a bit!" cried the sparrows, but she would not wait; in terror and anguish she flew homewards. She was ready to sink down upon the earth, and the crowd of birds, both small and great, increased every moment; some even flew at her to peck her.

"Only look! Only look!" cried they all.

"Only look! Only look!" squeaked out the young ones as she flew towards the nest. "Surely



that is a young peacock, for peacocks are of all manner of colours ; they hurt the eyes, mother said. Twit, that is the beautiful !”

And then they attacked her with their little beaks, so that she could not possibly get into the nest, and she was so overcome with fright that she could not even say “twit,” far less tell them that she was their mother. And now all the other birds pecked her—not a single feather was left ; wounded and bleeding, she sank into the rose-bush.

“Poor creature !” said the roses, “we will hide thee. Come, rest thy little head upon us.”

Once more the suffering bird tried to unfold her wings, then closed them again, and died among her neighbours, the fresh lovely roses.

“Twit, twit !” quoth one of the young sparrows in the nest ; “I can’t imagine where mother is staying ; perhaps this is a trick of hers to teach us to shift for ourselves. She has left us the house for an inheritance, but I should like to know which of us is to have it when we have families.”

“Ah, I can tell you that !” said the youngest. “I shall not let you stay here when I have a mate and children of my own.”

“But I shall have more wives and children than you,” said another.

“But I am the eldest,” cried a third ; and then all began to scold, flap their wings, and peck with their beaks, till one after another was thrown out of the nest. There they lay full of anger and spite ; they held their heads on one side and winked with their eyes : this was their fashion of sulking.



They could already fly a little, and through practice they improved ; and, at last having agreed to separate, they settled a mode of salutation, whereby they might recognise each other if they should chance to meet in the wide world before them. This was to say "twit," and scrape the ground three times with the left leg.

The youngest sparrow, who remained in the nest, made himself as big as he could. He was now a householder. However, his dignity did not last long. One night, red lightning flashed through the window-panes, flames of fire burst forth from under the roof, the dry straw was immediately in a blaze, the house was burned, and with it the sparrow and his nest. The young married pair happily escaped.

When the sun rose next morning, and everything seemed refreshed, as after a gentle nightly slumber, nothing was found remaining of the cottage except a few blackened beams attached to the chimney, which stood among the ruins quite its own master.

There was a strong smell of burning all around, but the rose-tree flourished still as blooming as ever, and the peaceful water of the pond reflected every single bough and flower just as before.

"How pretty those roses look blossoming close to the ruined cottage!" exclaimed a passer-by. "It is the most charming little picture imaginable ; I must have it !"

And he took out of his pocket a little book with blank leaves—for he was an artist—and sketched the blackened, smoking ground, the half-burnt, planks, the chimney which seemed to lean on one side more and more every moment, as if

about to fall, and, in the foreground, the large, beautiful rose-tree, whose beauty, indeed, had been the cause of the little picture being sketched.

Later in the day, two of the former inmates of the nest hopped by. "Where is the cottage?" said they; "where is the nest? Twit, it is all burned, and our strong little brother is burned also. That is because he turned us out of the nest. Those roses have had a narrow escape; there they are still with their cheeks as red as ever; they care not a grain for their neighbours' misfortunes. Well, I shall not speak to them, and this is a horrible place, that is my opinion!" And away they flew.

In the course of the autumn there was one beautiful, sunshiny day, such a day as one never expects to meet with except in the height of summer. The courtyard in front of the grand flight of steps leading up to the hall door was swept unusually dry and clean, and there flitted to and fro a multitude of doves, some black, some white, some violet-colour. Their plumage glittered in the sunshine, and the ancient and respectable matrons of the dove-family bustled about with much stateliness, crying out to their children, "Stand in groups! Stand in groups!" for this was the best way of showing themselves off to advantage.

"Who are those little gray birds hopping about amongst us?" asked an old dove with red and green eyes. "Little grey birds, little grey birds!" repeated she.

"They are sparrows, respectable creatures; we have always had the credit of being good-natured, so we allow them to pick up a few of our

grains. They never talk to us, and they scrape so neatly with their legs !”

They did scrape ; three times they scraped with their left legs, and then said “twit,” and thus they recognised each other ; they were, in fact, three sparrows from the nest in the roof of the burnt cottage.

“Provisions are uncommonly good here !” said the sparrows. Meanwhile the doves hopped round, ruffled their plumes, and made their private observations.

“Just look at the crop-pigeon !” said one dove to another. “Do but look at her ; see how she snaps up the peas ! She gets too many ; she gets the best. Coo, coo ! look what an ugly, wicked creature she is—coo, coo !”

And the dove's eyes sparkled with malice. “Join the group, join the group, little grey birds, little grey birds ! Coo, coo, coo !” And then their beaks went to work, and so it will be a hundred years hence.)

The sparrows ate heartily, and listened attentively ; nay, they even joined the group, but were soon weary. So they left the doves to themselves, and, after indulging in a few remarks on their late companions, hopped under the garden fence, and, finding the door of the summer-house open, one of them ventured upon the threshold.

“Twit,” said he ; “see what I dare to do !”

“Twit,” said another ; “I will do more !” whereupon he hopped into the room.

Nobody was there, and the third sparrow perceiving this, flew boldly in, crying out, “Either do a thing thoroughly, or not at all. What a

ridiculous human nest this is ! And how is this ? What do I see ? ”

Plainly set before the eyes of every sparrow were their old neighbours the roses ; they mirrored themselves in the water, and the blackened beams of the cottage rested slantingly upon the falling chimney. Well might the sparrows exclaim, “ How is this ? How came all this in the apartments of the great ? ”

And they all tried to fly over the chimney, but their wings were repulsed by a flat wall, for the whole scene was in reality a large splendid picture which the artist had made from his little sketch.

“ Twit,” said the sparrows, “ it is nothing at all ; it is only an appearance : twit, that is the beautiful ! Can you understand it, for I can’t ? ” And they flew away, for people came into the room.

Days passed, years passed, many times had the doves cooed and wooed, nay, they quarrelled, too, malicious birds that they were ! The sparrows lived luxuriously in summer, and were half frozen in winter. Most of them were either betrothed or married ; they had young ones, and each, of course, thought his own the handsomest and cleverest of all the sparrows in the world. They flew hither and thither, and, when they chanced to meet, they greeted each other with a “ twit,” and three scrapes of the left leg.

The eldest of them was now much advanced in years ; she had lived a single life ; she had neither nest nor young ones, and, wishing once more to visit a large town, she one day flew to Copenhagen.

Here she saw a large handsome house standing close by the palace and the canal, in which lay vessels heavily laden with fruits and wine. The windows of the house were wider below than above, and, on peeping through, every apartment appeared to Miss Sparrow's eyes like a tulip, so rich and varied were the hues that adorned the walls.

In the midst of all these gay apartments stood a number of white figures, some of marble, some only of plaster ; but, marble or plaster, it was all the same to Miss Sparrow. On the roof of the house was a metal car, with metal horses, and the goddess of victory, likewise of metal, guiding them. It was Thorwaldsen's Museum.

"How it shines ! How it shines !" quoth the ancient sparrow-maiden. "Why, this must be the 'beautiful.' Twit, it is much larger than a peacock !" She remembered what her mother told her formerly about the largest specimen of the beautiful known to her.

And she flew down into the court ; this also was splendid. Palm-branches and fresh green foliage were painted on the walls, and in the centre was a large rose-tree in full blossom, its fresh green branches, laden with flowers, drooping over a grave—one solitary grave.

She flew to the spot, for many other sparrows were there. "Twit," said she, and scraped the ground three times with her left leg. This greeting she had practised again and again that year, and no one had understood it, for friends once parted do not meet every day. The salute had become a mere matter of form, but now to her surprise two old sparrows and one young one

said "twit" in return, and likewise scraped with their left legs.

"Ah, good-morning, good-morning!" Here had met together no less than three old sparrows from the swallow's nest in the cottage-roof, and one of their descendants.

"To think that we should all meet here!" said they. "This is a very fine place, but there is not much to eat; it is the beautiful, you know! Twit!"

Several persons now came into the court from one of the rooms where stood the marble figures, and they went up to the grave which held the remains of the great master whose skill had formed them.

All stood with glistening eyes round Thorwaldsen's grave, and some picked up the scattered rose-leaves to carry home with them. There were travellers from distant lands, from mighty England, from Germany, and from France; and the fairest lady in the company plucked one of the roses, and wore it near her heart.

This made the sparrows believe that the roses reigned here, and that this magnificent mansion had been built for them alone; it seemed to them rather too much honour; nevertheless, as mankind was evidently so intent upon showing respect to the roses, they determined to do the same.

"Twit," said they, and swept the ground with their tails, winking with one eye upon the roses the while. Long did they look at them before they could quite make up their minds whether these roses were or were not their old neighbours; yes, such most assuredly they were. The artist



who had sketched the rose-bush growing near the blackened remains of the cottage had afterwards gained permission to transplant it, and had then given it to the architect of the museum.

Nowhere could roses be found more lovely or more fragrant than those borne by this tree ; so it was planted close by Thorwaldsen's grave, and there, a living symbol of the beautiful, it blossomed year after year, and gave its bright-hued, delicate leaves to be carried away as remembrances to foreign lands.

"So you have got an establishment in this town !" said the sparrows. And the roses nodded assent ; they had recognised their neighbours, and were very glad to see them.

"How delightful it is to live and blossom here, to see old friends sometimes, and kind faces every day ; here every day is like a festival !"

"Twit," said one of the sparrows ; "to be sure, they are our old neighbours. Ah, I remember the time when they lived by the duck-pond ; twit, how droll it is that they should attain such a high station. Some folks come to honour while they are sleeping. And what there is so wonderful in a great red rag like that, I can't think ! Ah, there is a withered leaf ; that I can see !"

And they pecked at it till the leaf fell off, but the tree looked all the fresher and greener, and the roses gave forth their perfume to the sunbeams even after they had fallen on Thorwaldsen's grave, with whose long-enduring name the memory of their fleeting beauty thus became linked.

## THE BELL

EVERY evening, when the sun disappeared and the clouds glistened like gold among the high chimneys of the town, there was heard, sometimes by one, sometimes by another, a strange deep sound like the pealing of a church bell. Only for a moment could it be heard, for there was such an incessant rumbling of carts and carriages, such a bustle of coming and going, such a noise of singing and shouting as well-nigh bewildered one, and at times quite drowned the distant chime.

"Hark !• there is the evening bell," people used to say ; " the sun is just setting."

If you went beyond the town into the suburbs, where the houses stood farther apart, with gardens and meadows lying between them, you would behold the evening sky arrayed in colours still more bright and beautiful, and hear the tones of the unknown bell ringing far more loudly and sweetly. It seemed as if the sound must proceed from some church deep within the still, fragrant forest in the distance, and you could not help casting a glance thitherwards, and feeling impressed with pious awe.

Time passed on, the bell still pealed regularly as ever. At last people said, "Can there be a church in the forest? The tones of the bell are indeed strange, and exceedingly beautiful. Why should we not go and search into this mystery?"

And, accordingly, the rich drove thither in their carriage, and the poor walked on foot. But

they found distance longer than they had expected, and, when they reached the willow-grove that skirted the forest, they must needs sit down to rest in the shade, and they would look up into the branches overhead and fancy themselves already in the forest.

And soon the chief confectioner in the town came out and spread his tent there, and this excited a rival confectioner to do the like, and he must needs hang up a bell right over his tent. This bell was covered with tar to preserve it from the rain, but it had no clapper. So when the people returned home, they declared that they had enjoyed themselves extremely, and that it was quite a romantic excursion—quite a gipsy party.

There were three persons who boasted of having penetrated right through as far as the other side of the forest, and they asserted that there also they had heard the singular tones of the supposed bell ; but that the sound then seemed to proceed from the town. And one man wrote a long poem about the bell, in which he likened it to the voice of a mother speaking to a beloved child, and declared that no melody might compare in depth and sweetness with that thrilling, unearthly chime.

The poem aroused the attention of the Emperor of that country, and he promised that whoever should discover the cause of this mysterious sound, should bear the title of " Universal Bell-ringer," even though it should turn out that there was no bell at all.

So, in hopes of obtaining this distinction, several persons went rambling all over the forest,

but only one returned with any pretence at an explanation. Not that he penetrated much deeper than the others ; however, he asserted that the bell-like tones came from a very large owl in a hollow tree. It was the Owl of Wisdom, he said, and she was incessantly striking her head against the tree ; but whether the sound proceeded from her head or from the hollow trunk, he owned frankly he could not decide.

Nevertheless, he was appointed " Universal Bell-ringer," and published every year a short, treatise " On the Owl of Wisdom." For all this, people were just about as wise as they were before.

It was a confirmation day. The bishop had addressed the children so kindly and earnestly, bidding them remember that this day was for them a most important day ; that the blessing of God had been invoked upon their heads. They had all at once ceased to be children, and become full-grown men and women ; and their childish minds, therefore, must now unfold into the maturity of reason.

The glorious sunlight shone around them, as the newly confirmed walked all together out of the town, when suddenly the marvellous, incomprehensible bell was heard pealing loudly from the distant forest.

Immediately the young Christians were seized with a longing to go and search into the cause of the sound. All agreed to set out forthwith in search of the mystery, except three. One of these wanted to go home and try on her ball-dress—and, indeed, had it not been for the ball, she would not have cared about being confirmed

that year. Another was a poor boy who had borrowed his confirmation coat and boots from the innkeeper's son, and had promised to return them within a fixed time. As for the third, he declared that he never went to any strange place without his parents ; he had always been a good child, and intended to be so still, although he was confirmed, and they ought not to laugh at him for it. Laugh, however, they did, and that right heartily.

So three went back to the town, while the rest sped merrily on their way. The sun shone, the birds sang, and the newly confirmed sang with them, all holding each other by the hands. They had none of them yet entered upon the business of life ; they were like brothers and sisters, all equal, all children of the good God above them.

But very soon two of the youngest became weary and turned back, and two little girls sat down by the wayside to weave garlands ; they stayed so long that it seemed of no use trying to overtake the rest.

And when the party reached the willow-grove where stood the confectioner's tent, they said to each other, " See, here we are at last ! After all, there is really no such thing as the bell ; it is only a fancy of ours ! " However, in that same moment the bell was heard to peal from out the forest depths, in tones so sweet and solemn, that four or five determined to seek it further.

The trees grew close together, many branched and thickly leaved—it was no easy task to make a path through ; anemones and the sweet-scented woodroof grew almost too high ; honeysuckles

and wild convolvuluses hung in long wreaths from tree to tree ; the nightingales sang, and the joyous sunbeams, peeped in here and there through the boughs.

Oh ! the forest was most beautiful, though certainly it was no place for girls ; they would have torn their frocks among the brambles. Several large blocks of stone, covered with lichens of every colour, formed a basin whence shot up a fountain of fresh spring water ; it gushed merrily forth, with a strange gurgling noise, like " cluck, cluck ! "

" And what if this should be the bell ? " suggested one of the young adventurers ; and he crouched down on the ground to listen. " I must examine this thoroughly. " So there he stayed examining, and let the others go on without him.

They came to a cottage built with bark and boughs ; a large tree bearing wild crab-apples leaned over it, as if to shower down its rich blessing over the roof. A rose-bush was trained up the front wall, its green leaves and bright-red flowers clustering thickly round the gable-end, and just under this gable-end hung a little bell.

Could this be the bell they sought ? Yes, all agreed that it was, excepting one, who said it was far too small, and its tones were too low to have been heard at such a distance, and that the chimes which had stirred the hearts of all men so powerfully were indeed very different.

He who spoke thus was a King's son ; so the others said, " This is always the way ; these grand folks must needs be wiser than all the rest of the world put together. "

So they suffered him to pursue his way alone,



and, as he wandered on, he felt his spirit more and more impressed with the silent beauty of the forest. He could still hear the ringing of the little bell whose sight had so delighted his comrades, and at times, too, the wind bore over to him the tones of the confectioner's bell, as it rang the holiday-makers to tea.

But the deep, solemn strokes that had called him forth from the town sounded above them all, growing louder and louder, and more and more like the music of an organ. And he fancied this singular music proceeded from some place to his left, from the side where the heart beats.

Suddenly there was a rustling among the bushes ; the King's son turned round and saw beside him a little boy wearing wooden shoes, and a jacket with sleeves so short as to leave his wrists quite bare.

The King's son recognised him immediately. It was the boy who could not come with the rest in search of the bell, because he must first restore his borrowed confirmation clothes. This he had done, and had then followed alone in his wooden shoes and miserable patched garments ; for the bell rang with a melody so clear and deep, that he felt he must come and seek it.

"Well, then, we can go on together," said the King's son.

But the poor youth in the wooden shoes was very bashful. He tugged at his short jacket sleeves, and said he feared he could not walk so quickly ; besides, he thought that the bell must be sought towards the right, because the right-hand side was always the place of honour.

"Certainly, then, we shall not agree at all,"

replied the King's son ; and he nodded a friendly farewell to the poor boy, who went on into the deepest, thickest recesses of the wood, where the thorns tore his clothes to pieces, and made his face, hands, and feet bleed terribly.

The King's son, on his part, did not escape without a few sharp scratches ; but the sun shone full on his path, and he it is whom we shall follow. A royal heart, indeed, had this King's son.

"The bell I must and will find," said he, "even should I go to the end of the world after it !"

Hideous, grinning monkeys sat chattering and grinding their teeth among the branches. "Shall we cudgel him ?" cried they, "shall we thrash him ? He is a King's son !"

But, nothing daunted, on he passed, deeper and deeper into the forest shades, where grew the loveliest and strangest flowers. Large white lilies with blood-red stamens, and sky-blue tulips, waving to and fro in the wind, sprang up at his feet, and apple-trees extended to him their tempting fruit, shining like great glistening soap-bubbles in the dazzling sunbeams.

Here and there were seen clear spots of the freshest greensward, where hart and hind sported together under the shade of magnificent oaks and beeches ; and, if the trunks of some of these were riven asunder, grass and long creepers covered the cleft.

Calm, glassy lakes, too, he saw, white swans swimming upon their bosom, and continually flapping their long snowy wings. The King's son often stood still to look and listen ; often he fancied that the bell-like tones must issue from the depths of one of these unruffled lakes. However,

he was soon convinced of his mistake ; he still heard the pealing of the bell, but still, as ever, it came from some distant region of the forest.

At last the sun set, the firmament glowed as if on fire, the forest seemed more silent, more sacred than ever. He sank upon his knees, sang his evening hymn, and, when it was ended, said to himself, "Never shall I find that which I seek ! The sun is setting ; night, dark night, is coming on. I would fain see the round, red sun once more, before it sinks beneath the earth ; I will climb up yonder group of rocks ; the centre peak is as high as the tallest tree in the forest."

And, seizing hold of roots and shrubs, he clambered over the moist stones, where water-snakes lay writhing their long, smooth coils, and toads sat croaking at him. Up he clambered, and gained the peak just before the sun, as seen from that height, had quite disappeared.

Oh, what a scene now burst upon his eyes ! The sea, the great, glorious sea, was spread before him, dashing its foaming billows on the coast ; and the half-set sun shone like a rich golden altar in the place where sea and sky met, melting into each other, into the same glowing hues.

The forest sang, the sea sang, and his heart sang with them. All Nature seemed one vast and holy church, in which the trees, crowned by light hovering clouds, formed the arched pillars, flowers and grass being woven into a soft velvet carpet at his feet, while heaven itself hung like a spacious dome overhead.

And as he gazed, the bright-red hues faded rapidly away ; the sun had quite vanished, but, one by one, millions of stars burst out, just as if

millions of diamond lamps had been suddenly kindled.

The King's son, raised his arms in grateful rapture towards heaven, sea, and forest ; and just at that moment the poor youth, in wooden shoes and the short jacket, came forward from the right-hand side ; following his own path, he had in the end been brought to the same spot.

They ran to meet each other, and stood together, hand in hand, in the vast church of nature and poetry, whilst above them pealed the holy, invisible bell ; and blessed spirits hovered round, singing in chorus their own triumphant hallelujah !

## THE DARNING-NEEDLE

THERE was once a darning-needle so fine that she fancied herself a sewing-needle.

"Now take care, and hold me fast !" said the darning-needle to the fingers that took her up. "Don't lose me, pray ! If I were to fall down on the floor, you would never be able to find me again, I am so fine !"

"That's more than you can tell !" said the fingers, as they took hold of her.

"See, I come with a train !" said the darning-needle, drawing a long thread, without a single knot in it, after her.

The fingers guided the needle to the cook-maid's slippers ; the upper leather was torn, and had to be sewn together.

"This is vulgar work !" said the darning-needle. "I shall never get through ; I break—

I am breaking !”—and break she did. “ Did I not say so ? ” continued she. “ I am too fine ! ”

“ Now she is good for nothing,” thought the fingers ; however, they must still keep their hold. The cook-maid dropped sealing-wax upon the darning-needle and then stuck her into her neckerchief.

“ See, now I am a breast-pin ! ” said the darning-needle. “ I knew well that I should come to honour ; when one is something, one always becomes something.” And at this she laughed, only inwardly, of course, for nobody has ever seen or heard a darning-needle laugh ; there sat she now at her ease, as proud as if she were driving in her carriage, and looking about her on all sides.

“ May I take the liberty of asking if you are of gold ? ” inquired she of the pin that was her neighbour. “ You have a pleasing exterior, and a very peculiar head ; it is but small, though. You must take care that it grows, for it is not every one that can have sealing-wax dropped upon her ! ” And the darning-needle drew herself up so proudly that she fell off from the neckerchief into the sink, where the cook was engaged just then in washing-up.

“ Now for our travels ! ” said the darning-needle ; “ but I hope I shall not go very far.” However, she did travel far, very far.

“ I am too fine for this world,” said she, as at last she sat still in the gutter. “ However, I know who I am, and there is always some little pleasure in that.”

And so the darning-needle held herself erect, and did not lose her good-humour.



All sorts of things sailed past her—splinters of wood, straws, scraps of old newspapers. "See, how they sail along!" said the darning-needle. "They do not know what is sticking under them! It is I. I stick—I sit here. There goes a splinter, he thinks of nothing in the world but himself, splinter as he is. There floats a straw, to see how it turns round and round! Nay, think not so much of thyself, thou might'st easily float against one of the stones. There swims a newspaper—everything in it is forgotten, yet now it spreads itself out! I sit patiently and quietly! I know what I am, and that I shall always be the same!"

One day there chanced to be close by her something that glittered so charmingly that the darning-needle felt persuaded it must needs be a diamond; it was, in reality, only a splinter of glass, but, delighted with its appearance, the darning-needle addressed it, introducing herself as a breast-pin. "Surely you are a diamond?"

"Why, yes, something of the sort!" was the reply. So now each believed the other to be some very rare and costly trinket, and they both began to complain of the extraordinary haughtiness of the world.

"Yes, I have dwelt in a box belonging to a young lady," said the darning-needle, "and this young lady was a cook-maid; she had five fingers on each hand, and anything so arrogant, so conceited as these five fingers I have never known; and after all, what were they good for? For nothing, but to hold me, to take me out of the box, and lay me in the box!"

"And were they at all bright? Did they shine?" asked the glass splinter.



"Shine!" repeated the darning-needle, "not they, but conceited enough they were, notwithstanding! They were five brothers; 'Finger' was the family name; they held themselves so erect, side by side, although they were not all of the same height.

"The first, Thumbkin he was called, was short and thick; he generally stood out of the rank rather before the others; he had only one bend in his back, so that he could only bow once, but he used to say that if he were cut off from a man, that man would no longer be fit for military service.

"Foreman, the second, would put himself forward everywhere, meddled with sweet and with sour, pointed at sun or moon, and he it was who pressed upon the pen whenever the fingers wrote. Middleman was so tall that he could look over the others' heads. Ringman wore a gold belt round his body; and as for Littleman, he did nothing at all, and was proud of that, I suppose. Proud they were, and proud they would be; therefore I took myself off into the gutter!"

"And now we sit together and shine!" quoth the glass splinter.

Just then some more water was poured into the gutter; it overflowed its boundaries and carried the glass splinter along with it.

"So now he has advanced farther," observed the darning-needle. "I stay here, I am too fine, but such it is my pride to be; it is respectable!" So still she sat there erect, enjoying her own thoughts.

"I could almost believe I was born of a sunbeam, I am so fine; and yet the sunbeams do

not seem to seek me out under the water. Alas ! I am so fine that even my mother cannot find me. Had I still my old eye which broke, I believe I could weep. I would not, though—it is not refined to weep.”

One day some boys were raking about in the gutter, hunting for old nails, pennies, and such like. This was very dirty, certainly, but such was their pleasure.

“Hollo !” cried one, pricking himself with the darning-needle ; “there’s a fellow for you !”

“Do not call me a fellow ; I am a young lady,” said the darning-needle, but none heard it. The sealing-wax had worn off, and she had become quite black. Black, however, makes a person look thin ; so she fancied herself finer than ever.

“There sails an egg-shell,” said the boys, and they stuck the darning-needle into the shell.

“White walls and a lady in black,” said the darning-needle ; “that is very striking. Now, every one can see me. But I hope I shall not be sea-sick, for then I shall break.” Her fear was needless ; she was not sea-sick, neither did she break.

“Nothing is so good to prevent sea-sickness as being of steel, and then, too, never to forget that one is a little more than man. Now my trial is over. The finer one is, the more one can endure.”

Crash went the egg-shell. A wagon rolled over it. “Ugh, what a pressure !” sighed the darning-needle ; “now I shall be sea-sick after all. I shall break—I shall break !”

But she broke not, although the wheel had passed over her. Long did she lie there—and there let her die.

## THE SHADOW

IN HOT countries the sun's rays burn with a vengeance ! People have their complexions dyed a mahogany brown colour, and in the very hottest regions of all are scorched into negroes.

Our story, however, relates not to these very sultry climes, but to one of the moderately hot countries, which was visited, once upon a time, by a learned man from the cold, cold north.

This learned man at first imagined that he might run about as freely as he had been used to do at home ; but he was soon undeceived, and, like all other sensible people, he remained in his house all day long, keeping the doors and window-shutters closed, just as if everybody were asleep or away from home. The narrow street of high-built houses where he dwelt was so situated that the sunbeams fell full upon it from dawn of day till evening. It was positively unbearable, and the learned man from the cold country felt as if sitting in a heated oven.

He was a young, as well as a wise man, and the sun injured his health ; he became quite thin ; his shadow also—for the sun affected that as well as himself—was, during the daytime, considerably smaller than it had used to be. However, at night, after the sun had set, both man and shadow constantly revived.

It was really a pleasure to see the change ! As soon as lights were brought into the room the shadow stretched itself up the wall, nay, even as far as the ceiling ; it seemed stretching itself to

the utmost in order to recover its original size.

The learned man used to go out on the balcony—that was *his* place for stretching—and, when the stars shone forth in the clear, balmy atmosphere, he felt a new life breathing through his limbs. Figures of men and women then made their appearance on all the balconies in the street, and in hot countries no single window is without a balcony, for people must have air, even though they are accustomed to be turned to mahogany colour.

Above and below, everything became full of life : butchers and bakers, cobblers and tailors, flitted about the streets ; chairs and tables were brought out, and lamps, nay, thousands of lamps, were lighted. One shouted, another sang, some walked, some drove, some rode on asses—klingle-ling, the little bells on their harness tinkled merrily as they passed—little boys let off squibs and crackers, the church-bells pealed, psalms were sung, and many a solemn funeral procession moved along. Yes, the street was then thoroughly alive ?

Only in one house—it was that which stood exactly opposite the one in which dwelt the northern student—there was silence, and yet it could not be uninhabited, for flowers adorned the balcony. They flourished beautifully amid the sun's burning heat, and flourish they could not, unless constantly watered, and watered they could not be without hands. Besides, every evening the balcony window used to open ; and, although it was quite dark within, at least in the foremost chamber, from some deeper recess the notes of music were heard, incomparably delicious

—at least, so thought our stranger. But this might very possibly be only a fancy, as, according to him, everything in this hot country was incomparably delicious, always excepting the sun.

The stranger's landlord declared that he did not know who occupied the house opposite, no one had ever been seen there, and as for the music, it seemed to him dreadfully tedious. "It is," said he, "just like a person sitting and practising a piece which he cannot play—always the same piece. 'I shall play it at last,' he keeps on saying, but it is plain that he never will, with all his practising."

One night the stranger was sleeping. He slept close to the open window, the curtains were waved aside by the wind, and the opposite balcony was discovered wrapped in a wondrous splendour. All the flowers shone like flames of the loveliest and most varied hues, and amid the flowers stood a tall, graceful maiden, surrounded by a glory which dazzled his eyes—indeed, in his eagerness he opened them so fearfully wide that he awoke.

With one spring he was on the floor, crept softly behind the curtain, but the lady was gone—the glory which had dazzled his eyes was gone—the flowers shone no longer. They looked exactly as they had been wont to look, the door was half open, and deep from within sounded music soft and plaintive. Surely this was sorcery, for who could be living there?

One evening the stranger was sitting in his balcony; lights were burning in the apartment behind him, and consequently, as was quite natural, his shadow fell upon the opposite wall.



There it seemed to sit among the flowers of the balcony, and whenever its master moved, the shadow moved also, as a matter of course.

"I verily believe my shadow is the only thing stirring to be seen over there," said the learned stranger. "See how comfortably it sits among the flowers; the door within is half open; I do wish my shadow would but have the sense to walk in, look about, and then return to tell me what it had seen there. Ah, it might be of great advantage to thee!" continued he, jestingly. "Be so kind as to step forward! Well, wilt thou go?" And he nodded to the shadow, and the shadow nodded again in return. "Well then, go, but don't stay!"

And forthwith the stranger arose, and his shadow on the opposite balcony rose also; the stranger then turned round, whereupon the shadow likewise turned round, and any close observer might have seen that the shadow passed through the half-opened door into the apartment in the opposite house, just as the stranger retired into his own room, closing the long curtains behind him.

Next morning the learned man went out to drink coffee and read the journals. "How is this!" he exclaimed, as he came into the sunshine; "why, I have no shadow! Then it really did pass over into the opposite house yesterday evening, and has not returned! Now, on my word, this is the most provoking thing ever heard of!"

He was vexed, not so much because his shadow was gone, as because he knew that there was already a story about a man without a shadow



which was well known to all the people in his own country, so that now, if he were to tell his story, everybody would call him a plagiarist, and that would not please him at all. So he determined to say nothing about it, and this was certainly a wise resolve.

In the evening he went again into the balcony, first placing the candles so as to be just behind his back, for he knew that a shadow always requires its master to act as its screen. But he could by no means entice it forth ; he stretched himself, he contracted himself, but no shadow made its appearance. He said, "Hem, hem !" but that was of no avail either.

All this was vexatious ; however, in hot countries everything grows very fast ; accordingly, after eight days had elapsed, on going into the sunshine, he observed, to his great delight, that a new shadow was beginning to spring out from under his feet. The root must have remained there, and in three weeks' time he had once more a very tolerable shadow, which, as he was now travelling homewards, increased rapidly in size during the journey, until at last it became so long and so broad that half of it might have sufficed him.

So this same learned man now returned to his cold fatherland, and he wrote books about all that was true, and good, and beautiful in the world. Days passed on—and weeks passed on—and years passed on—many years.

One evening, when he was sitting alone in his room, he heard a low tapping at the door.

"Come in !" he said, but no one came in ; so he arose and opened the door. Before him stood

a man so thin and meagre that the sight quite startled him. This stranger was, however, exceedingly well dressed, and appeared a person of rank. "With whom have I the honour of speaking?" inquired the scholar.

"Ah, I thought as much!" replied the thin gentleman. "I expected that you would not recognise me. I have gained so much body lately—I have gained both flesh and clothes—I daresay you never thought to see me in such excellent condition. Do you not recollect your old *shadow*? Ah! you must have fancied I never meant to return at all. Things have gone so well with me since I was last with you, that I have become quite wealthy! I can easily ransom myself, if it be necessary!"

And with these words he passed his hand over the heavy gold watch-chain which he wore round his neck, and rattled the large bunch of costly seals which hung from it—and oh! how his fingers glittered with the diamonds encircling them! And all this was real!

"No, I cannot recover my senses!" exclaimed the scholar. "What can all this mean?"

"Certainly, it is rather extraordinary," said the shadow. "But then you yourself are by no means an ordinary man; and, as you know, I have trod in your steps from childhood. As soon as you thought me capable of going alone, I went my own way in the world. My circumstances are most brilliant; nevertheless, a sort of yearning came over me to see you once more before you die. You must die, you know! Besides, I felt a wish to see this country again, for one cannot help feeling love for one's own father-

land. I know that you have now another shadow ; have I to pay you anything for it ? Be so kind as to tell me how much ? ”

“ Is it really and truly thyself ? ” cried the scholar ; “ this is, indeed, most extraordinary ! Never could I have believed that my old shadow would return to me a man ! ”

“ Tell me what I am to pay ? ” repeated the shadow, “ for on no account would I remain in any one's debt. ”

“ How canst thou speak so ? ” said the scholar. “ Why talk about debts ? Thou art perfectly free, and I am exceedingly rejoiced to hear of thy good fortune. Come, old friend, sit down and tell me how it has all come to pass, and what thou didst see in that mysterious house just opposite mine in the hot country ! ”

“ Well, I will tell you, ” said the shadow, sitting down as requested ; “ but then, you must first promise that you will never let any one in this town, where, perchance, you may meet me again, know that I was once your shadow. I have some thoughts of matrimony ; I have the means for supporting more than one family ! ”

“ Have no fear, ” replied the scholar, “ I will not reveal to any one what thou really art. Here is my hand—upon my honour as a gentleman, I promise it ! ”

“ And I will speak truly—upon my honour, as a shadow ! ” rejoined the mysterious visitor ; of a truth, he could hardly express himself otherwise.

It was, certainly, quite wonderful to see how much of a man he had become. He was dressed completely in black, the finest black cloth, with

shining boots, and a hat which could be squeezed together, so as to be only crown and brim—not to speak of things, we have already mentioned—gold chain, seals, and diamond rings. Yes, indeed, the shadow was uncommonly well dressed ; and, in fact, it was his dress which made him appear so completely a man.

“ Well, then, now I will tell you all about it,” said the shadow ; and he planted his legs, with the shining boots, as firmly as he could upon the arm of the scholar’s new shadow, which lay like a poodle at its master’s feet. This was done, perhaps, out of pride, but more probably under the idea that he might, perchance, induce it into cleaving to himself for the future. And the recumbent shadow kept its place on the ground, still and motionless, lest it should lose a word ; for it was naturally anxious to learn how it might, in its turn, free itself and become its own master.

“ Can you guess who proved to be dwelling in the opposite house ? ” asked the shadow triumphantly. “ It was Poesy—most beautiful, most charming Poesy ! I was there three weeks, and that is as good as if I had lived there three thousand years, and had read all that was imagined and written during that time. This I declare to you, and it is true ; I have seen all, and I know all ! ”

“ Poesy ! ” cried the scholar ; “ ah, yes ! she often dwells, a hermitess, in the very heart of a bustling city. Poesy ! yes. I, too, have seen her, but it was only for one moment, when sleep had charmed my eyes ; she stood at the balcony, radiant and glorious as the Northern Lights. Oh,

tell me, pray tell me ! Thou wert in the balcony, thou didst enter by the door, and then——”

“Why, then I was in the antechamber,” said the shadow ; “you recollect you used to sit looking across into the antechamber. It was not lighted up ; it was in a kind of twilight. But door after door, all open, led through a long suite of rooms and saloons, and in the distance there were lights in plenty, quite an illumination. Indeed, the glare would have killed me had I passed on into the lady’s apartment. But I was prudent, I took my time and was patient, as every one should be.”

“And what didst thou see ?” inquired the scholar.

“I saw everything ! and I would tell you all about it, only—it is not pride, by any means, but as a free man, and a man of education and science, not to speak of my high position and circumstances—I do wish you would treat me with more respect. Cannot you give up that way of continually *thou-ing* me, and call me *you* ?”

“I beg pardon !” said the scholar ; “it is an old habit, and, therefore, difficult to cure one’s self of. You are quite right, and I will try to remember. But now tell me all you saw.”

“All, indeed,” returned the shadow ; “for I have seen all, and I know all.”

“What were the inner chambers like ?” again inquired the scholar. “Seemed they like fresh, balm-breathing groves ? Seemed they like a holy church ? Were those chosen halls like the starry heavens when beheld from a mountain height ?”

“Everything beautiful was there !” said the

shadow. "I did not exactly go in ; I remained in the twilight of the outer room, but that was an excellent position ! I saw everything, and I know everything ! I have been at Poesy's Court—I have been in the antechamber !"

"But what did you see ? Did all the ancient divinities pass through spacious halls ? Did not bold heroes and chivalrous knights do battle there as in olden times ? Were there not pretty, fairy-like children gambolling together, and telling each other their dreams ?"

"I repeat that I was there, and I beg you to understand that I saw everything which was to be seen, and I became a man ! Had you gone over, possibly you might have become something more ; but, thus was it with me. I gained the knowledge of my inmost nature, my properties, and the relationship I bore to Poesy.

"During the time I spent with you, I thought little of these matters. Whenever the sun rose or set, as you know, I became wonderfully tall ; indeed, by moonlight, I might have been thought more noticeable even than yourself, but I did not then understand my own nature. In that antechamber all was made plain—I became a man ! I left the place completely altered.

"You were no longer in the hot country, and I was ashamed to go about as a man then. I wanted boots and clothes ; in short, all that distinguishes a man, or rather, makes him known to be such.

"I took my way—yes, I think I may trust you with my secret, and you must not put it into a book—I took my way under the cook-maid's cloak. I hid myself in it ; she little thought whom



she was sheltering. It was evening when I first ventured out ; I ran along the street in the moonlight, I stretched myself up along the wall ; that is so pleasant and cooling to one's back ! I ran up and I ran down, I peeped into rooms through the uppermost, even through the attic, windows ; I peeped where no one else could peep ! I saw what no one else could see !

"After all, this is but a poor miserable affair of a world ! I would not be a man, but for the imaginary honour of the thing. I saw the most incredible, unheard of things among all ranks and classes.

"I saw," continued the shadow emphatically, "what none must know, but all would so much like to know—*their neighbours' secret evil deeds*. Had I published a new journal, would not people have read it ? But, instead of this, I wrote to the individuals themselves, whose private doings I had spied out ; and thus I raised wonder and fear in every town I visited.

"They were so afraid of me, and they loved me so much ! Professors made me a professor ; tailors gave me new clothes—you will observe, I am well provided ; coiners struck coin for me ; and women declared I was so handsome ! And thus I became the man you see me. And now, I must bid you farewell. Here is my card ; I dwell on the sunny side of the way, and am always at home in rainy weather."

And the shadow took his departure.

"Strange, certainly, very strange !" said the scholar.

Days and years passed away—the shadow came again.

"How is it with you?" he inquired.

"Alas!" sighed the scholar, "I still write of what is true, and good, and beautiful, but no one seems to care to hear of such things. I am quite in despair. I suppose I take it to heart too much."

"That I never do," returned the shadow. "I am growing fat, as every one should try to be. Ah, you don't understand the world, and thus you suffer yourself to be disgusted with it. You should travel; I intend to make a tour this summer; suppose you come with me? I should like to have a companion; will you travel with me as my shadow? It would be a great pleasure to me to have you with me, and I will pay your expenses."

"An odd proposal, certainly!" and the scholar smiled at the idea.

"What matter, when it suits both of us? Travelling will do wonders for you. Be my shadow, and you shall have everything you want."

"This is too absurd; you are mad!"

"If I am, all the rest of the world is mad, too, and mad it will be to the end." And with this the shadow went its way.

Meantime, the scholar's affairs grew worse and worse; sorrow and care pursued him, and as for his writing about the true, and the good, and the beautiful—all this was for the multitude about just as much use as it would be to scatter roses at the feet of a cow. At last he became downright ill.

"Actually, you look like a shadow!" said his friends; and a shiver thrilled through the scholar's frame on hearing the words.

"You must go to the baths," said the shadow,

at his next visit ; " there is nothing else for you. I will take you with me for old acquaintance sake. I will pay the expenses of the journey, and you shall write descriptions and entertain me on the way. I want to go to the baths myself ; my beard does not grow quite as it should do, and that is as bad as a disease ; for one cannot do without a beard. Now, be reasonable, and accept my offer ; we shall travel as comrades."

And so they travelled : the shadow was now the master, and the master was the shadow. They drove, they rode, they walked always together, sometimes side by side, sometimes before or behind one another, according to the position of the sun.

The shadow always took care to secure the place of honour for himself, but for this the scholar cared little ; he was really a kind-hearted man, and of mild and placid temper. One day, however, he said to the shadow, " As we are now fellow-travellers, not to speak of having grown up together from childhood, why should we not call each other ' thou ' ? It sounds so much more affectionate and familiar."

" There is something in what you say," replied the shadow, or rather the master, for such he was to all intents and purposes. " It is kindly and honestly said ; I will be no less honest and kind. You, as a man of learning, must know well what strange whims nature is subject to at times.

" Some men there are who cannot endure the smell of brown paper—it makes them quite ill ; others shiver all over whenever any one scratches a pane of glass with a nail, and, in like manner, I have a most painful feeling whenever I hear you

say 'thou' to me. I feel myself, as it were, pressed to the earth—reduced to my former servile position. You see it is a delicacy of feeling; certainly it is not pride. At anyrate I cannot suffer you to say 'thou' to me, but I will willingly call you 'thou,' and thus your wish will be half fulfilled."

So, henceforth, the shadow called its former master "thou."

"This is rather cool," thought the latter; "I to address him as 'you,' and he to say 'thou' to me." But there was no help for it.

They arrived at one of the spas. Many strangers were there, and amongst them a King's daughter, marvellously beautiful. Her malady consisted in this—that she was too sharp-sighted; so much so as rendered her quite uncomfortable.

She, of course, perceived at once that the new-comer was quite a different sort of person from all the other visitors. "They say," observed she, "that he comes here because his beard will not grow, but I see well the real cause—he cannot cast a shadow."

Her curiosity was excited. Accordingly, one day, meeting him on her walk, she took the opportunity of accosting him. Being a King's daughter, it was not necessary for her to use much ceremony; so she said at once, "Your malady is that you cannot cast a shadow."

"I am delighted to find that your Royal Highness is so much better!" was the shadow's reply. "I am aware that it has been your misfortune to be too keen-sighted; but that disease must be entirely cured, for the fact is, that I have a very unusual shadow! Do you not see the person who always walks close to me?"

"Other men have mere common shades for their shadows, but I do not like anything that is common. You may have observed that people often give their servants finer clothes, for their liveries than they wear themselves; in like manner, I have allowed my shadow to dress himself up like a man, and, in fact, as you see, I have even given him a shadow of his own. This has been rather expensive, certainly; but I love to be peculiar."

"Hem!" thought the Princess, "am I actually recovered? There is nothing like these baths; the waters have of late years had powers almost miraculous. But I shall not leave the place at present, for it is only just beginning to grow amusing; this stranger pleases me exceedingly; it is to be hoped that his beard will not grow, for, if it does, I suppose he will go away."

That evening, in the grand assembly room, the King's daughter danced with the shadow. She was very light, but he was still lighter; such a partner she had never had before. She told him what country she came from, and he knew the country. He had been there, though at a time when she was not at home. He had peeped in at both upper and lower windows of the palace; he had seen many curious things, so that he could answer the questions of the Princess and make revelations to her that were positively startling.

Surely, he must be the wisest man living! She was struck with wonder and awe, and by the time they had danced the second dance, she was fairly in love with him. Of this the shadow soon became aware; her eyes were continually piercing him through and through. They danced

a third time, and she was very near telling him what she thought. But, very prudently, she restrained herself, remembering her land and heritage, and the multitude of beings over whom she would reign at some future period.

"He is a wise man," thought she; "that is well! and he dances charmingly, that is well, too; but has he solid acquirements? They are of no less importance. I must try him;" and she began to propound to him various questions, so difficult that she could not have answered them herself; and the shadow made up a very strange face.

"Then you cannot answer me?" said the King's daughter.

"Oh, I have learned all that in the days of my childhood," replied her new acquaintance. "I believe that my shadow, even now standing at the door yonder, could answer you."

"Your shadow? That would be rather remarkable!"

"Mind, I do not say decidedly that he can, but I should think so; he has followed me and listened to all I have said for so many years—yes, really, I should think he could answer you. But your Royal Highness must first permit me to warn you that he especially prides himself upon passing for a man, so that to keep him in good-humour—and without that you will get nothing out of him—he must be treated quite as if he were a man."

"Oh, with all my heart!" said the Princess. So she went up to the learned man standing at the door, and began conversing with him about the sun and moon, and different nations, both



far and near ; and he answered her in such a manner as fully proved his wisdom and learning.

What a wonderful man must he be who has so wise a shadow ! ” thought the Princess ; “ it would be a positive blessing to my kingdom and people if I were to choose him for my consort. And I will do it ! ”

And they were soon agreed—the King’s daughter and the shadow ; but no one was to know of their engagement before the Princess returned to her own country.

“ No one shall know, not even my shadow ! ” declared the intended bridegroom ; and for this arrangement, no doubt, he had his own reasons.

So they went forthwith to the country of the Princess.

“ Listen to me, my good friend ! ” said the shadow to the scholar. “ I have now arrived at the height of happiness and power—I must think of doing something for thee ! Thou shalt always live with me at the palace, drive out with me in the royal carriage, and receive an annuity of a hundred thousand rix-dollars ; but, in return, thou must suffer every one to call thee a shadow ; thou must never tell any one that thou hast been a man. Once every year, when I sit publicly in the balcony in the sunshine, thou must lie meekly at my feet, as every shadow should lie. For, know this : I am going to marry the King’s daughter ; this very evening the nuptials will be celebrated.”

“ No, this is too bad ! ” exclaimed the scholar ; “ this shall never be. It would be deceiving the whole country, not to speak of the King’s daughter. I will make everything public—how

that I am the man and thou art the shadow—that thou art only dressed like a man !”

“No one will believe you,” returned the shadow. “Be reasonable, pray, or I shall call the guard.”

“I am going straight to the King’s daughter !” cried the scholar.

“But I am going first,” said the shadow, “and thou art going to prison.” And to prison he went, for, of course, the guard obeyed him whom they knew their Princess had chosen as her consort.

“Thou tremblest !” observed the Princess, when the shadow entered her apartment ; “has anything happened ? Thou must not be ill this evening—our bridal evening !”

“I have lived to see the most fearful thing,” said the shadow ; “you would never believe it ; ah ! a poor shadow-brain cannot bear much—just imagine it. My shadow has become crazy ; he actually believes that he is a man, and that I—only think !—that I am his shadow !”

“This is shocking, indeed !” said the Princess ; “I hope he is locked up.”

“Of course ; I am much afraid he will never recover himself.

“Poor shadow ! he is truly unfortunate ; it would really be a charity to free him from the little life he possesses. And, indeed, when I consider how ready people are in these days to take part with the lower classes against the great, it seems to me that the best thing we can do will be to make away with him privately.

“It is hard, very hard, for he has been a faithful servant.” And the shadow made as though he sighed.

"You are a noble character!" exclaimed the King's daughter.

That evening the whole city was illuminated; cannon were fired—boom!—and the soldiers presented arms. All this was in honour of the royal wedding. The King's daughter and the shadow went out on the balcony to show themselves, and hear "Hurrah!" shouted again and again.

The scholar heard nothing of all these grand doings, for they had already taken his life.

## THE OLD HOUSE

THERE stood in a street a very, very old house; it was, indeed, almost three hundred years old, as might be known by looking at the beam on which the date of its building was carved out along fantastic tulips and curling hop-tendrils. Whole texts, too, were cut in the time-worn wood, after the fashion of days bygone, and over every window peered a human face—such curious, wry faces they were!

The first floor of this house projected a good way beyond the ground floor, and immediately under the roof ran a leaden gutter with a dragon's head to it. The rain-water was meant to run out from the dragon's mouth, but there being a hole in the gutter, it generally chose rather to pour down through this hole.

All the other houses in the street were so new, and so neat, and so spruce, with their large window-panes and flat smooth walls, it was quite plain that they would have nothing to do with

the old house. You could see so well that they were saying within themselves, "How much longer is that heap of rubbish to stand here, a disgrace to the street? Why, the upper story puts itself so forward that no one from our windows can see what is being done underneath it! And just look at the steps, too; they are as broad as if they belonged to a castle, and as high. One would suppose that they led up to a church-steeple; the iron balustrade looks, for all the world, just like the entrance to an old tomb, and it must needs have brass knobs, too. So stupid, so tasteless!"

On the opposite side of the street all the houses were new, neat, and spruce, and they were all of the same way of thinking as the other houses. But at one of the windows, looking straight at the old house, used to sit a little boy with fresh rosy cheeks and bright sparkling eyes, and he thought better of this despised old building; he loved it both in sunshine and moonshine.

And, when he sat there, looking at the mouldering wall from which all the mortar had worn away, he could fancy such strange pictures! He could image to himself how the street looked three centuries back, when all the houses had flights of steps, projecting upper stories, and pointed gable-ends. He could see soldiers walking about with halberts in their hands, and gutters running down in the shapes of dragons and griffins.

Yes, that was just the house to please him, and in it, he knew, dwelt an old gentleman who wore large brass buttons on his coat, and such a wig! You could be sure it was a real wig. Every morning a serving-man, as old as his master,

came to him to clean up his rooms and go on errands ; at other times the old gentleman in brass buttons was quite alone in the old house. Sometimes he came and looked out from his window, and then the little boy nodded to him, and he nodded again to the little boy, and thus they became friends and acquaintances, although they had never yet spoken to each other.

But that might come in time. The little boy heard his parents say, "The old gentleman opposite is very well off ; but it is terrible to be so quite alone as he is."

So next Sunday the little boy was very busy wrapping something up in paper ; he then went down to the door and watched till the old man who went on errands came by, and said to him, "Please to take this to the old gentleman up there for me. I have two tin soldiers ; this is one of them. I want him to have it, because I know that he is terribly lonely."

And the old man looked quite pleased, nodded, and took the tin soldier into the old house. By and by he came back to ask whether the little boy would not like to come himself and pay the old gentleman a visit. And the child got leave of his parents, and then went over the way into the old house.

The brass knobs on the balustrades shone much brighter than usual, he thought, as if they had been fresh rubbed in honour of his visit ; and the carved trumpeters, rising out of the tulips on the door, blew with all their might ; their cheeks, he was sure, were much more puffed out than ever they had been before. Yes, they blew their trumpets, "Ta-ra-ra-ra ! See the little boy

comes, ta-ra-ra-ra ! ” and then the door opened.

The whole length of the passage was hung with portraits of knights in armour and ladies in full silk robes, and the armour rattled and the silk robes rustled so pleasantly ! And then there was a staircase ; the stairs first went a good way up, and then a little way down ; and next the little boy and his conductor stood in a balcony, a very decayed balcony, with many a large chink and crevice in it, grass and weeds sprouting thickly out of all these gaps, and making the place look as green as if it had been a garden instead of a balcony.

Antique flower-pots, all having human faces and asses' ears, were ranged here ; the plants in them grew exactly as suited their own pleasure and convenience.\* In one pot were seen some straggling gilliflowers ; the green leaves and shoots—there were no blossoms yet—had spread out over the edges, as though in very great glee. You could see that the plant meant to say, “ The breeze has fanned me, the sun has kissed me, and promised me a little flower on Sunday—a little flower on Sunday ! ”

And then his guide led the little boy into a chamber where the walls were covered with leather hangings, with gold flowers stamped upon them.

“ Gilding may wear away,  
But leather shall last for aye ! ”

sang the walls.

And here stood such high-backed arm-chairs, carved all over, and with arms on each side. “ Sit down, sit down,” cried they. “ Ugh ! how I



am cracking inside ! I have got the rheumatism in my back like the old cabinet. Rheumatism in my back, ugh ! ”

At last the little boy entered the room which fronted the street, and where the old gentleman sat.

“ Thanks for the tin soldier, my little friend,” said the old gentleman. “ And thanks, too, for coming over to see me.”

“ Thanks, thanks ! ” or “ crack, crack ! ” said all the pieces of furniture in the room ; there were so many of them, and they stood in each other’s way to see the little boy.

On the middle panel of the wall hung the picture of a beautiful lady ; very young and very happy she looked ; but she was clad quite after the fashion of the olden time. She had powder in her hair, and her clothes stood out stiffly round her. She said neither “ thanks ” nor “ cracks,” but she looked with her gentle eyes upon the little boy, who immediately asked the old gentleman, “ Where did you get her from ? ”

“ From the pawnbroker’s,” replied the old gentleman. “ There are so many pictures to be had there ; nobody knows or cares anything about them, for the people they were meant for were all buried long ago. But I happened to know that lady in past times ; she is dead, too—dead and gone these fifty years.”

And under the portrait hung a bouquet of faded flowers, carefully preserved behind glass ; they must have been fifty years old, too, they looked so very antique. And the pendulum of the great clock swung backwards and forwards, and the hand went round and round, and every-

thing in the room grew older and older every moment, but they never thought of that.

"They say at home," said the little boy, "that you are so terribly lonely."

"Oh no!" was the reply. "The old thoughts, and the memories and scenes they bring with them, come and visit me continually; and now you are come, too! I am very happy."

And then the old gentleman took down from the book-case a picture-book—such pictures were those! There were long, endless processions; the strangest carriages, such as are never seen nowadays; soldiers not unlike knaves of clubs; and peaceable citizens bearing the banners of different companies. The tailors' flag showed a pair of scissors held between two lions; the shoemakers ought to have had boots for their device, but they had not—they carried an eagle with two heads, for everything belonging to shoemakers, you know, must be so that they may say, "It is a pair." Ah, a rare picture-book was that!

And presently the old gentleman went into an adjoining room to fetch out sweetmeats, nuts, and apples; the old house was rich in stores of these, it seemed.

Then spoke the tin soldier, who stood on the chest of drawers: "I cannot stand this, indeed! It is so sad and lonely here; no one who has ever been used to live in a family can accustom himself to such a life as is led here. No, I cannot bear it! The day is so long and wearisome, and the evenings are still longer. It is not as over the way with you, where your father and mother used to talk so pleasantly and sensibly, while you

and all the other sweet children played at your merry games.

"This old gentleman is quite a hermit ! Do you think there are any kind eyes watching him ? Do you think he ever has kisses given him, or a pretty Christmas-tree ? Nothing will ever be given to him, except his funeral ! No, I cannot bear it !"

"You must not take it in that way," said the little boy. "For my part, I think it is very pleasant to be here ; and did you not hear him say how all his old thoughts and memories came to visit him."

"That may be, but I don't see them, and I know nothing about them," replied the tin soldier. "I tell you I cannot bear it !"

"But you must bear it," insisted the little boy.

Here the old gentleman came back, a bright smile on his face, and the most delicious fruits and sweatmeats in his hand ; and the little boy quite forgot the tin soldier.

Happy and pleased the little boy returned home. Days and weeks passed away ; often and often did the little boy stand at the window to nod at the old house ; often and often did the old gentleman nod to him in return ; often and often did the little boy go to pay a visit over the way. And every time the carved trumpeters blew "Ta-ra-ra-ra ! See the little boy comes, ta-ra-ra-ra !" and the swords and the armour in the old knightly portraits rattled, and the ladies' silk robes rustled, the leather hangings chanted—

"Gilding may wear away,  
But leather shall last for aye !"

and the old arm-chairs cracked, because or the rheumatism in their backs.

It was always exactly as the first time the little boy had been there ; for, in the old house, every day, every hour even, passed like the foregoing.

"I cannot bear it !" again declared the tin soldier ; " it is so very sad, it makes me weep tin tears ! Rather let me go to the wars and lose my arms and legs ; that will be a change at least. I cannot bear this life. I know now what it is to be visited by one's old thoughts and memories, for mine have been paying visits to me, and I assure you there is no pleasure in it at all ; I have many a time been nearly jumping down off the chest of drawers. I saw all of you as plainly as if you had been here. It was Sunday morning again, and all you children were standing before the table and singing your hymns, as you always used to sing them ; there you stood, looking so earnest, and with your hands clasped, and your father and mother were listening so gravely.

"And then the door opened, and your little sister Maria, who is not yet two years old, and who always begins to dance whenever she hears music or singing of whatever kind it may be, she had better have stayed away for she immediately began to dance. But she could not make out the time at all, because the tune was so slow ; and so she stood first on one foot, with her head drooping down over it, and then on the other foot, leaning her head quite on the opposite side, but still she could not hit upon the right time.

"You, all of you, stood so grave, though it was really very difficult to be serious any longer ; I could not, I laughed inwardly, and therefore

I fell down from the table and lamed myself. I am lame still in consequence ; it was wrong of me to laugh.

"And all this happens over again within me, and so does everything else that I have lived through and seen ; and this is what the old gentleman means by ' his old thoughts, and the memories and scenes they bring with them.' But tell me, do you still sing on Sundays ? Tell me something about little Maria, and about my comrade, the other tin soldier—ah, he is a lucky fellow ! I cannot bear this life !"

"You are given away !" said the little boy ; "you must stay here, I wonder you don't see that !"

And the old gentleman brought out a drawer in which were kept many things wonderful to see—money-boxes, and balm-boxes, and packs of old-fashioned cards ; very large gilt cards were they, such as are never met with now. And other drawers, full of old curiosities, were opened, and the harpsichord, too, was opened ; there was a landscape painted on the inside of the lid, and the instrument was very hoarse when the old gentleman played upon it. He begun to hum a tune.

"Ah yes, she used to sing that !" said he ; and he looked up at the portrait he had bought at the pawnbroker's ; so brightly the old gentleman's eyes sparkled as he looked at it.

"I will go to the wars ! I will go to the wars !" cried the tin soldier as loud as ever he could, and down he fell upon the floor.

What could have become of him ? The old gentleman hunted in vain, the little boy hunted

in vain. "Never mind, I shall be sure to find him," said the old gentleman; however, he never could find him. The floor was full of cracks and crevices; the tin soldier had fallen through one of these crevices, and there he lay buried alive.

Evening came, and the little boy went home; weeks passed away—many weeks passed away. The windows were now quite frozen over; the little boy had to breathe hard upon them before he could make a tiny peep-hole through which he could look at the old house, and then he saw that the snow had drifted into all the wooden carving-work and quaint devices, and lay quite thick upon the steps, just as though no one were at home. And no one was at home; the old gentleman was dead.

On the evening of that day a carriage drove up to the door of the old house, and a coffin was carried down the steps; the old gentleman was to be buried far out in the country. The carriage drove away; no one followed it; all his friends were dead. The little boy kissed his hand to the coffin; then he saw it disappear.

A few days afterwards there was a sale at the old house; the little boy looked out from his window, watching to see the different pieces of furniture as they were carried out. The old knights and ladies, the flower-pots with the long asses' ears, the old chairs and cabinets, all his acquaintances, he saw taken away, some to one place, some to another. The portrait bought at the pawnbroker's returned to the pawnbroker's again, and there it was left undisturbed, for no one living now knew anything of that sweet,



gentle-eyed face, and no one cared about such an old, dusty, musty picture.

Next spring the house itself was pulled down, for "It was a disgrace to the street," people said. One could now look from the street right into the room where were the leathern hangings, all torn and gashed, and the green weeds of the balcony clung wildly round the fallen planks. By degrees all was cleared away.

"A very good thing, too!" declared the neighbouring houses.

And a pleasant new house with large windows and smooth white walls was built in its stead, and the space in front, where the old house had stood, was made into a little garden. Vines grew clustering up over the neighbours' walls, so as to shelter it on each side; and it was shut out from the street by a large iron grating with a trellis gate.

That looked quite grand; people stood outside and tried to peep in through the iron trellis. And the sparrows, too, clustered by dozens among the vines, chirping as loud and as fast as they could; not about the old house though, for that they could none of them have known.

Many years had elapsed, so many that the little boy we spoke of had grown up to be a man—yes, and a good and clever man he was—and his parents took great pride and pleasure in him. He had just married, and had removed with his fair young bride into this new house with the garden to it; and he stood by her side in the garden whilst she was planting a little field flower that had taken her fancy. She planted it

with her own pretty white hand, and smoothed down the earth round it with her fingers.

"Oh dear, what was that?" She had pricked herself; there was something sharp and pointed among the soft mould.

It was—only think—it was the tin soldier, the very same one which the old gentleman had lost, and which, after being tumbled and tossed about hither and thither, had now lain for many years quietly in the earth.

And the young bride wiped the tin soldier dry, first with a green leaf, and then with her own pocket-handkerchief, perfumed so deliciously, and the tin soldier felt as though awakening from a trance.

"Let me look at him," said the young man, and he smiled and shook his head. "No, it cannot possibly be the very same tin soldier, but it reminds me so of one that I had when I was a little boy."

And then he told his wife about the old house and the old gentleman, and the tin soldier that he had given him, because he was so terribly lonely. He told it exactly as it had been, and tears came into his young wife's eyes at thinking of the solitary life the old gentleman must have lived.

"I don't see why this should not be the very same tin soldier," said she; "I will keep it, just to put me in mind of all you have told me, and you must show me the old gentleman's grave."

"I wish I knew it," was the reply; "I believe nobody knows it. All his friends were dead, nobody cared about the matter, and I was such a little boy then!"

"He must have been terribly lonely, poor old gentleman!" remarked she.

"Yes, terribly lonely!" said the tin soldier; "but it is charming to find that one is not forgotten."

"Charming, indeed!" cried something close by; no one but the tin soldier recognised the thing that spoke; it was a shred from the old leather hangings, the gilding was all worn off, and it looked like a clod of moist earth; still it held by its former good opinion of itself and asserted it, too—

"Gilding may wear away,  
But leather shall last for aye!"

However, the tin soldier believed nothing of such vain boasting.

## THE FLAX

THE flax was in full bloom; its pretty blue blossoms were as soft as the wings of a moth, and still more delicate. And the sun shone on the flax field, and the rain watered it; and that was as good for the flax-flowers as it is for little children to be washed and kissed by their mother. They look so much fresher and prettier afterwards. Thus it was with the flax-flowers.

"People say I am so fine and flourishing," observed the flax, "and that I am growing so charmingly tall; a splendid piece of linen will be got from me. Oh, how happy I am. How can any one be happier? Everything around me is

so pleasant, and I shall be of use for something or another. How the sun cheers one up, and how fresh and sweet the rain tastes. I am incomparably happy. I am the happiest vegetable in the world."

"Ah, ah, ah!" jeered the stakes in the hedge; "you don't know the world, not you; but we know it, there are knots in us," and they cracked so dolefully—

"Snip, snap, snurre,  
Bassilurre,

And so the song is en—ded—ded—ded."

"No, it is not ended," replied the flax; "the sun shines every morning; the rain does me so much good I can see myself grow; I can feel that I am in blossom. Who so happy as I?"

However, one day people came, took hold of the flax, and pulled it up, root and all. That was exceedingly uncomfortable. And then it was thrown into water as if intended to be drowned, and, after that, put before the fire as if to be roasted. This was most cruel.

"One cannot always have what one wishes," sighed the flax; "it is well to suffer sometimes, it gives one experience."

But matters seemed to get worse and worse. The flax was bruised and broken, hacked and hackled, and at last put on the wheel—snurre rur! snurre rur! It was not possible to keep one's thoughts collected in such a situation as this.

"I have been exceedingly fortunate," thought the flax amid all these tortures. "One ought to be thankful for the happiness one has enjoyed in

times past. Thankful, thankful ; oh yes," and still the flax said the same when taken to the loom. And there it was made into a large, handsome piece of linen ; all the flax of that one field was made into a single piece.

"Well, but this is charming. Never should I have expected it. What unexampled good fortune I have carried through the world with me. What arrant nonsense the stakes in the hedge used to talk with their

‘ Snip, snap, snurre,  
Bassilurre.’

"The song is not ended at all ; life is but just beginning. It is a very pleasant thing, too, is life. To be sure, I have suffered, but that is past now, and I have become something through suffering. I am so strong, and yet so soft ; so white and so long. This is far better than being a vegetable ; even during blossom time nobody attends to one, and one only gets water when it is raining.

"Now, I am well taken care of. The girl turns me over every morning, and I have a shower-bath from the water-tub every evening ; nay, the parson's wife herself came and looked at me, and said I was the finest piece of linen in the parish. No one can possibly be happier than I am."

The linen was taken into the house, and cut up with scissors. Oh, how it was cut, and clipped, how it was pierced and stuck through with needles ! That was certainly no pleasure at all. It was at last made up into twelve articles of attire, such articles as are not often mentioned,

but which people can hardly do without ; there were just twelve of them.

"So this, then, was my destiny. Well, it is very delightful ; now I shall be of use in the world, and there is really no pleasure like that of being useful. We are now twelve pieces, but we are still one and the same—we are a dozen. Certainly this is being extremely fortunate."

Years passed away. At last the linen could endure no longer. "All things must pass away some time or another," remarked each piece. "I should like very much to last a little while longer, but one ought not to wish for impossibilities."

And so the linen was rent into shreds and remnants numberless. They believed all was over with them, for they were hacked and mashed and boiled, and they knew not what else ; and thus they became beautiful, fine, white paper.

"Now, upon my word, this is a surprise ! And a most delightful surprise too !" declared the paper. "Why, now I am finer than ever, and I shall be written upon. I wonder what will be written upon me. Was there ever such famous good fortune as mine ?"

And the paper was written upon ; the most charming stories in the world were written on it, and they were read aloud ; and people declared that these stories were very beautiful and very instructive ; that to read them would make mankind both wiser and better. Truly, a great blessing was given to the world in the words written upon that same paper.

"Certainly, this is more than I could ever have dreamt of when I was a little blue flower of the



field. How could I then have looked forward to becoming a messenger destined to bring knowledge and pleasure among men? I can hardly understand it even now. Yet, so it is, actually.

"And, for own part, I have never done anything, beyond the little that in me lay, to strive to exist, and yet I am carried on from one state of honour and happiness to another; and every time that I think within myself, 'Now, surely, the song is en—ded—ded—ded,' I am converted into something new, something far higher and better.

"Now I suppose, I shall be sent on my travels, shall be sent round the wide world, so that all men may read me. I should think that would be the wisest plan. Formerly I had blue blossoms; now, for every single blossom I have some beautiful thought or pleasant fancy. Who so happy as I?"

But the paper was not sent on its travels; it went to the printer's instead, and there all that was written upon it was printed in a book, nay, in many hundred books; and in this way an infinitely greater number of people received the pleasure and profit from it than if the written paper itself had been sent round the world, and perhaps got torn and worn to pieces before it had gone half-way.

"Yes, to be sure, this is much more sensible," thought the paper. "It never occurred to me, though. I am to stay at home and be held in as great honour as if I were an old grandfather. The book was written on me first, the ink flowed in upon me from the pen and formed the words. I shall stay at home while the books go about the

world, to and fro ; that is much better. How glad I am, how fortunate I am ! ”

So the paper was rolled up and laid on one side. “ It is good to repose after labour,” said the paper. “ It is quite right to collect one’s-self, and quietly think over all that dwelleth within one. Now first do I rightly know myself. And to know one’s self, I have heard, is the best knowledge, the truest progress. And, come what will, this I am sure of, all will end in progress—always is there progress ! ”

One day the roll of paper was thrown upon the stove to be burned, it must not be sold to the grocer to wrap round pounds of butter and sugar. And all the children in the house flocked round, they wanted to see the blaze, they wanted to count the multitude of tiny red sparks which seem to dart to and fro among the ashes, dying out, one after another, so quickly. They call them “ The children going out of school,” and the last spark of all is the schoolmaster. They often fancy he is gone out, but another and another spark flies up unexpectedly, and the schoolmaster always tarries a little behind the rest.

And now all the paper lay heaped up on the stove. “ Ugh ! ” it cried, and all at once it burst into a flame ; so high did it rise into the air ; never had the flax been able to rear its tiny blue blossoms so high, and it shone as never the white linen had shone. All the letters written on it became fiery red in an instant, and all the words and thoughts of the writer were surrounded with a glory.

“ Now, then, I go straight up into the sun ! ”

said something within the flames. It was as if a thousand voices at once had spoken thus, and the flame burst through the chimney, and rose high above it ; and brighter than the flame, yet invisible to mortal eyes, hovered little tiny beings, as many as there had been blossoms on the flax.

They were lighter and of more subtle essence than even the flame that bore them ; and, when that flame had died away, and nothing remained of the paper but the black ashes, they once again danced over them, and, wherever their feet touched the ashes, their footprints—the fiery red sparks—were seen. Thus, “The children went out of school, and the schoolmaster came last ;” it was a pleasure to see the pretty sight ; and the children of the house stood looking at the black ashes and singing—

“ Snip, snap, snurre,  
Bassilurre,  
And now the song is en—ded—ded—ded.”

But the tiny invisible beings replied every one, “The song is never ended ! That is the best of it ! We know that, and therefore none are so happy as we are !”

However, the children could neither hear nor understand the reply, nor would it be well that they should, for children must not know everything.

## THE DROP OF WATER

SURELY you know what a microscope is—that wonderful glass which makes everything appear a hundred times larger than it really is? If you look through a microscope at a single drop of ditch-water, you will perceive more than a thousand strangely-shaped creatures, such as you never could imagine dwelling in the water.

It looks not unlike a plateful of shrimps, all jumping and crowding upon each other; and so ferocious are these little creatures that they will tear off each other's arms and legs without mercy; and yet they are happy and merry after their fashion.

Now there was once an old man whom all his neighbours called Cribbley Crabbley—a curious name to be sure. He always liked to make the best of everything, and, when he could not manage it otherwise, he tried magic.

So one day he sat with his microscope held up to his eye, looking at a drop of ditch-water. Oh, what a strange sight was that! All the thousand little imps in the water were jumping and springing about, devouring each other, or pulling each other to pieces.

"Upon my word, this is too horrible!" quoth old Cribbley Crabbley; "there must surely be some means of making them live in peace and quiet." And he thought and thought, but still could not hit on the right plan. "I must give them a colour," he said at last; "then I shall be able to see them more distinctly;" and accor-

dingly he let fall into the water a tiny drop of something that looked like red wine, but in reality it was witches' blood ; whereupon all the strange little creatures immediately became red all over, not unlike the Red Indians ; the drop of water now seemed a whole townful of naked wild men.

"What have you there?" inquired another old magician, who had no name at all, which made him more remarkable even than Cribbley Crabbley.

"Well, if you can guess what it is," replied Cribbley Crabbley, "I will give it you ; but I warn you, you'll not find out it so easily."

And the magician without a name looked through the microscope.

The scene now revealed to his eyes actually resembled a town where all the inhabitants were running about without clothing. It was a horrible sight, but still more horrible was it to see how they kicked and cuffed, struggled and fought, pulled and bit each other.

All those that were lowest must needs strive to get uppermost, and all those that were highest must be thrust down. "Look, look!" they seemed to be crying out, "his leg is longer than mine ; pah ! off with it. And there is one who has a little lump behind his ear, an innocent little lump enough, but it pains him, and it shall pain him more !" and they hacked at it, and seized hold of him, and devoured him, merely because of this little lump.

Only one of the creatures was quiet and still ; it sat by itself, like a little modest damsel, wishing for nothing but peace and rest ; but the others

would not have it so. They pulled the little damsel forward, cuffed her, cut at her, and ate her.

"This is most uncommonly amusing," remarked the nameless magician.

"Do you think so? Well, but what is it?" asked Cribbley Crabbey. "Can you guess, or can you not? That's the question."

"To be sure I can guess," was the reply of the nameless magician, "easy enough. It is either Copenhagen or some other large city. I don't know which, for they are all alike. It is some large city."

"It is a drop of ditch-water!" said Cribbley Crabbey.

## THE HAPPY FAMILY

THE largest green leaves that you can find in the country are the burdock-leaves. If a little girl takes one of them and holds it in front of the skirt of her frock, it serves her as an apron; and if she place it on her head, it is almost as good a shelter against the rain as an umbrella—so very large are these leaves.

Never is one burdock-leaf found growing alone; wherever one grows, a whole colony of them grow also; they are sociable leaves and beautiful, too, but all their beauty is food for the snails.

Those large white snails of which the grand folks used, in olden time, to make fricassees, dined off the burdock-leaves, and greedily ate of them, saying all the while, "Hum, how nice, how exquisite!"



They thought the food delicious ; they lived upon burdock-leaves, and for their sakes, they imagined, the burdock-leaves had been sown.

Now there was an old-fashioned manor-house ; snails were no longer cooked and eaten there, for not only had the custom died away, but the last owners of the house had also died, and no one lived in it at all. But burdock-leaves grew near this house, and they had not died away ; they still grew and thrived and multiplied, and as there was no one to weed them up, they spread over all the paths and all the beds till the garden at last became a perfect wilderness of burdock-leaves.

Here and there, indeed, might still be seen a solitary apple or plum tree. Otherwise no one could possibly have guessed that this place had ever been a garden ; on all sides you saw burdock-leaves—nothing but burdock-leaves. And among them dwelt two old snails, the last of their race.

Even they themselves could not tell how old they were, but they could remember perfectly that their family had once been very numerous, that they belonged to a colony from a foreign land, and that for them and theirs the whole grove had been planted. Beyond the burdock-grove they had never been, but they knew that there was another place in the world called the manor-house, and that there snails were cooked, and then became black, and were laid upon silver dishes.

But what happened afterwards they could not divine. Nor could they at all imagine how they would feel when cooked and laid on silver dishes ; but that it was very delightful, and a very great

honour and distinction, of that they were certain. Neither the cock-chafer, the toad, or the earth-worm, all of whom they had questioned on the subject, could give them any correct information, for not one of these had ever been cooked or laid in a silver dish. No creatures in the world were held in such high honour as these old white snails, they were quite sure of that. The burdock-wood had grown up solely on their account, and the manor-house stood beyond merely that they might some day be taken there, cooked and laid on silver dishes.

They now lived a very lonely and yet a very happy life, and, as they had no children of their own, they had taken a liking to a little common snail, and brought it up as their own child. Unfortunately, this little snail, being of a different species, could not grow larger, so as to become like its foster parents; however, old mother snail insisted that she could perceive he was growing fast, and she begged father snail, since he could not see it as she did, to touch the little snail's house and feel it. And old father snail felt the house, and acknowledged that the mother was in the right.

One day there came a heavy shower of rain. "Only listen, what a drum-drum-drumming there is on the burdock-leaves!" remarked father snail.

"It is the drops that make that drumming," rejoined the mother snail. "Look, now they are running straight down the stalk; you will see it quite wet presently. I am glad we have our own good house, and the little one, too, he is safe in his. Certainly, it cannot be denied that more

is done for us than for all other creatures put together ; it is easily seen that we are of the first importance in the world. We have houses provided for us from our birth, and the burdock-wood is planted for our sakes ! I should rather like to know, though, how far it extends, and what is beyond it."

"There is nothing beyond it !" quoth father snail. "And if there were any other places, what would it signify ? No place can be better than this ; we have nothing to wish for."

"I cannot say that, for my part," replied mother snail. "I own I should like to go up to the manor-house, and there be cooked and laid in a silver dish. All our forefathers went there, and only think what an honour it must be !"

"Most probably the manor-house has fallen to pieces," said father snail, "or else the burdock-grove has grown over it, so that the human beings cannot now get out to fetch us. However, there is no need to be in such haste, but you are always in such a violent hurry about everything, and the little one too, he begins to take after you. Why, he has crept all up the stalk in less than three days ; it makes my head turn quite dizzy to look at him !"

"Don't scold him," said mother snail, "he crawls so cleverly ! We shall have great pride and pleasure in him, and what else have we old folk got to live for ? But there is one thing we ought to think of now ; how are we to get him a wife ? Don't you think that far out in the burdock-grove there may perhaps be a few more of our family left ?"

"Black snails, no doubt, there are in plenty,"

replied the other ; “ black snails without houses, but they are so low, so vulgar ! I’ll tell you what we can do ; we can commission the ants to look about for us. They are always running backwards and forwards, as if all the business in the world had to be done by them ; they must certainly be able to find a wife for our little snail.”

“ To be sure, we know where is the loveliest little creature imaginable ! ” exclaimed five or six ants, who were passing by just then. “ But perhaps she may not choose to listen to the proposal, for she is a Queen.”

“ What does that matter ? ” returned the two old snails. “ Has she a house ? That is much more to the purpose.”

“ A house ! ” repeated the ants ; “ she has a palace ! the most magnificent ant-palace, with seven hundred passages.”

“ Oh, thank you ! ” said mother snail ; “ if you fancy our son is going to live in an ant-hill, you are very much mistaken, that’s all. If you have no better proposal to make than that, we can give the commission to the white gnats ; they flutter about in rain and in sunshine ; they know every corner of the burdock-grove quite intimately.”

“ Ah, yes, we know the wife for him ! ” declared the gnats, on being appealed to. “ A hundred human paces off there sits, on a gooseberry bush, a little snail with a house ; she lives so solitary, poor thing, like a hermit, and she is quite old enough to marry. It is only the distance of a hundred human paces.”

“ Well, then, let her come to him,” said the old snails ; “ that will be most fitting ; he has a

burdock-grove, she has only a gooseberry bush."

And so the gnats fluttered away to make the offer to little Miss Snail. Eight days passed before she made her appearance ; so much the better ; that showed she came of the right breed.

And now the bridal solemnities were held. Six glow-worms shone as brightly as they could ; otherwise, the whole affair passed off very quietly, for neither of the two old snails could endure merriment and rioting. Indeed, father snail was too much moved to be able to say a word ; but mother snail made a most beautiful and affecting speech, giving to the two young people the whole burdock-grove for their inheritance, and declaring, as she always had declared, that it was the best, if not the only place in the world. Moreover, she promised that, if they lived together peaceably and honestly, and multiplied in the grove, they and their children should at last be taken to the manor-house, there to be cooked till they were black, and then be laid on silver dishes.

After this speech was ended, the two old snails crept back into their houses, and never came out again ; there they slept. And the young snails reigned in the burdock-wood in their stead, and had a numerous posterity.

But they never had the good fortune to be cooked, or to be put in silver dishes, and so they decided that the manor-house must have fallen to pieces, and that all the human beings in the world must be dead. No one ever contradicted them in this opinion, and therefore it must needs be true. And, for their sakes, the raindrops beat upon the burdock-leaves and made drum music ;

and, for their sakes, the sun shone on the burdock-leaves, giving them a bright green colour ; and they were very happy, and the whole snail family were very happy.

## THE FALSE COLLAR

THERE was once a fine gentleman whose toilet-table displayed nothing but a boot-jack and a comb, but he possessed the most charming false collar in the world, and it is the history of this collar that the following pages would relate. The collar was so old that he began to think of marriage.

It so chanced that one day in the wash he and the garter were thrown together. "Well, upon my honour," quoth the false collar, "never have I seen anything so slender and delicate, so pretty and soft ! May I take the liberty of asking your name ?"

"Certainly not, and if you do ask, I shall not tell you," replied the garter.

"Where do you live ?" inquired the collar.

But the garter was very modest and shy, and seemed to think that even this was too impertinent a question.

"Surely you must be a waist-band," said the collar, "a Queen's waist-band, perhaps ! I see you are useful as well as ornamental, pretty lady !"

"You must not speak to me," returned the garter ; "I do not think I have given any encouragement to such behaviour."

"Yes, indeed," insisted the false collar ;



"beauty like yours may encourage one to anything."

"You are not to come so near me," said the garter; "you look as if you belonged to a man."

"I am a fine gentleman!" retorted the false collar proudly, "I have a boot-jack and a comb, all to myself." But this boasting was not true; they belonged to his master, not to himself.

"Don't come so near me, I tell you," repeated the garter; "I am not accustomed to such familiarities."

"So you're a prude, are you?" quoth the discomfited false collar, and just then he was taken out of the wash-tub. He was starched, and next he was hung across a chair in the sunshine, and at last laid upon the ironing-board. And now the hot iron approached him.

"Lady!" cried the false collar; "pretty widow lady, I am growing so warm—I am burning hot! I am becoming quite another creature, the wrinkles are all taken out of me; you will burn a hole in me. Ugh! Pretty widow, suffer me to pay my addresses to you!"

"Stuff!" exclaimed the iron, as she passed haughtily over the collar; for she imagined herself to be a steam engine, and that she was meant, some day or another, to be put on a railroad to draw carriages.—"Stuff!" she said again.

The collar was a little unravelled at the edges; so a pair of scissors was brought to clip off the loose threads.

"Oh!" cried the false collar, "surely you must be a ballet-dancer; how cleverly you can throw out your limbs! Never have I seen any-

thing half so charming. I am sure that no human being in the world could do anything at all like it !”

“ You need not tell me that, I know it already,” replied the scissors.

“ You deserve to be a countess,” said the false collar. “ Alas ! I am only a fine gentleman ; to be sure, I have a boot-jack and a comb. Oh, if I had but an earldom !”

“ Does he really mean this for courtship ?” said the scissors. “ I wonder what next !” And forthwith she cut him, for she was very indignant. So he had his third dismissal.

“ I can still address the comb. It is quite delightful to see how long you have kept all your teeth, fair lady !” Thus spoke the false collar to the comb. “ Have you never thought of betrothing yourself ?”

“ Why, yes,” replied the comb ; “ if you particularly wish to know, I will tell you a secret. I am engaged to the boot-jack.”

“ Engaged to the boot-jack ?” repeated the false collar, in consternation. There was now no one left to whom he could pay his addresses ; accordingly he began to despise the fair sex altogether.

A long, long time passed away. At last the collar found himself in a box at the paper-mill. The box harboured a large community of rags and tatters, and this community formed itself into snug coteries, the fine keeping by themselves, and the coarse by themselves, just as it ought to be. Every one of them had a great deal to say, but the false collar most of all, for he was a perfect braggadocio.

"I have had so many sweethearts!" declared the false collar, "they would not let me have any peace because I was such a fine gentleman, and so well starched; I had both a boot-jack and a comb, neither of which I ever used. You should have seen me when I lay down, I looked so charming then.

"Never shall I forget my first love; she was a waistband, so delicate, so soft and pretty; she threw herself into a tub of water, in her despair of winning my love.

"Then there was the widow lady, who grew red with passion because I slighted her; however, I left her to stand and cool at her leisure. Cool she did, no doubt, and black she turned, but that does not matter.

"There was the ballet-dancer, too; she gave me the cut direct. I shall never forget how furious she was. Why, even my own comb was in love with me; she lost all her teeth through care and anxiety.

"Yes, indeed, I have lived to make many experiences of this sort, but I suffer most remorse on account of the garter—I mean the waist-band—who threw herself into the tub of water. I have a great deal on my conscience; I wish I could become pure white paper!"

And white paper the collar became. All the rags were made into white paper, but the false collar was made into this very identical sheet of white paper now before you, gentle reader, the sheet upon which this history is printed. And this was the punishment for his shameless boasting and falsehood.

And it is well that we should all read the story

and think over it, that we may beware how we brag and boast as the false collar did ; for we can hardly make sure that we may not some unlucky day get into a rag-chest, too, and be made into white paper, and have our whole history, even our most secret thoughts and doings, printed upon us, and thus be obliged to travel about the world and make our misdeeds known everywhere, just like the false collar.

## STORY OF A MOTHER

A MOTHER sat watching her little child ; she was so sad, so afraid lest it should die. For the child was very pale ; its eyes had closed ; its breathing was faint ; and every now and then it fetched a deep sigh, and the mother's face grew sadder and sadder as she watched the little, tiny creature.

There was a knock at the door, and a poor old man wrapped up in a great horse-cloth came in. He had need of warm clothing, for it was a cold winter's night ; the ground outside the house was covered with ice and snow, and the wind blew keen and cutting into the wanderer's face.

And as the old man was shivering with cold, and the little child seemed just at that moment to have fallen asleep, the mother rose up and fetched some beer in a little pot, placing it inside the stove to warm it for her guest. And the old man sat rocking the cradle ; and the mother sat down on a chair beside him, still gazing on her sick child, listening anxiously to its hard breathing, and holding its tiny hand.

"I shall keep him, do you not think so?" she inquired. "God is good; He will not take my darling away from me!"

And the old man—it was Death himself—bowed his head so strangely, you could not tell whether he meant to say Yes or No. And the mother cast down her eyes, and tears streamed over her cheeks. She felt her head growing so heavy; for three whole days and nights she had not closed her eyes, and now she slept, but only for a minute; presently she started up, shivering with cold.

"What is this?" she exclaimed, and she looked around her. The old man was gone, and her little child was gone; he had taken it with him. And yonder, in the corner, the old clock ticked and ticked; the heavy laden pendulum swung lower and lower, till at last it fell on the floor, and then the clock stood still also.

But the poor bereaved mother rushed out of the house, and cried for her child.

Outside, amidst the snow, there sat a woman clad in long, black garments, who said, "Death has been in thy room; I saw him hurry out of it with thy little child; he strides along more swiftly than the wind, and never brings back anything that he has taken away."

"Only tell me which way he has gone!" entreated the mother. "Tell me the way, and I will find him."

"I know the way," replied the woman in black robes; "but before I show it thee, thou must first sing to me all the songs thou hast ever sung to thy child. I am Night, and I love these songs. I have heard thee sing them many a time,

and have counted the tears thou hast shed whilst singing them."

"I will sing them all, every one," said the mother, "but do not keep me now; let me hasten after Death; let me recover my child!"

But Night made no reply; there she sat, mute and unrelenting. Then the mother began to sing, weeping and wringing her hands the while. Many were the songs she sang, but many more were the tears she wept! And at last Night said, "Turn to the right, and go through the dark fir-grove, for thither did Death wend his way with thy child."

But deep within the grove several roads crossed, and the poor woman knew not in which direction she should turn. Here grew a thorn-bush, without leaves or flowers, for it was winter, and icicles clung to the bare branches.

"Oh! tell me, hast thou not seen Death pass by, bearing my little child with him?"

"Yes, I have," was the thorn-bush's reply; "but I will not tell thee which way he has gone, unless thou wilt first warm me at thy bosom. I am freezing to death in this place; I am turning into ice."

And she pressed the thorn-bush to her breast so closely as to melt all the icicles. And the thorns pierced into her flesh, and the blood flowed in large drops. But the thorn-bush shot forth fresh green leaves, and was crowned with flowers in that same bitter cold winter's night—so warm is the heart of a sorrowing mother! And the thorn-bush told her which path she must take.

And the path brought her on to the shore of a



large lake where neither ship nor boat was to be seen. The lake was not frozen hard enough to bear her weight, not shallow enough to be waded through, and yet she must cross it if she would recover her child. So she lay down, thinking to drink the lake dry. That was quite impossible for one human being to do, but the poor unhappy mother imagined that perchance a miracle might come to pass.

"No, that will never do!" said the lake. "Rather let us see if we cannot come to some agreement. I love to collect pearls, and never have I seen any so bright as thine eyes; if thou wilt weep them into my bosom, I will bear thee over to the vast conservatory where Death dwells and tends his trees and flowers—each one of them a human life."

"Oh, what would I not give to get my child!" cried the mother. And she wept yet again, and her eyes fell down into the lake, and became two brilliant pearls. And the lake received her, and its bosom heaved and swelled, and its current bore her safely to the opposite shore where stood a wondrous house many miles in length. It were hard to decide whether it was really a house and built with hands, or whether it was not rather a mountain with forests and caverns in its sides. But the poor mother could not see it at all; she had wept out her eyes.

"Where shall I find Death that I may ask him to restore to me my little child?" inquired she.

"He has not yet returned," replied a hoary-haired old woman who was wandering to and fro in Death's conservatory, which she had been

left to guard in his absence. "How didst thou find thy way here? Who has helped thee?"

"Our Lord has helped me," she answered; "He is merciful, and thou, too, wilt be merciful. Where shall I find my little child?"

"I do not know," said the old woman; "and thou, I perceive, canst not see. Many flowers and trees have withered during the night; Death will come very soon to transplant them. Thou must know that every human being has his tree or flower of life, as is appointed for each. They look like common vegetables, but their hearts beat. So be of good cheer; perchance thou may'st be able to distinguish the heart-beat of thy child; but what wilt thou give me if I tell thee what else thou must do?"

"I have nothing to give," said the mourning mother; "but I will go to the end of the world at thy bidding."

"I want nothing from the end of the world," said the old woman; "but thou canst give me thy long black hair. Thou must know well that it is very beautiful; it pleases me exceedingly! And thou canst have my white hair in exchange; even that will be better than none."

"Desirest thou nothing further?" returned the mother; "I will give it thee right willingly." And she gave away her beautiful hair, and received instead the thin snow-white locks of the old woman.

And then they entered Death's vast conservatory, where flowers and trees grew in wonderful order and variety. There were delicate hyacinths protected by glasses, and great, healthy peonies. There grew water-plants, some looking quite

fresh, some sickly ; water-snakes were clinging about them, and black crabs clung fast by the stalks. Here were seen magnificent palm-trees, oaks, and plantains ; yonder clustered the humble parsley and fragrant thyme.

Not a tree, not a flower, but had its name, and each corresponded with a human life ; the persons whose names they bore lived in all countries and nations on the earth ; one in China another in Greenland, and so forth.

There were some large trees planted in little pots, so that their roots were contracted and the trees themselves ready to break out from the pots ; on the other hand, there was many a weakly, tiny herb set in rich mould, with moss laid over its roots, and the utmost care and attention bestowed upon its preservation.

And the grieving mother bent down over all the tiniest plants ; in each one she felt the pulse of human life, and out of a million others she distinguished the heart-throb of her child. " There it is ! " cried she, stretching her hand over a little blue crocus-flower which was hanging down on one side, sickly and feeble.

" Touch not the flower ! " said the old woman, " but place thyself here ; and when Death shall come—I expect him every minute—then suffer him not to tear up the plant, but threaten to do the same by some of the other flowers—that will terrify him ; for he will have to answer for it to our Lord ; no plant may be rooted up before the Almighty has given permission."

Suddenly an icy cold breath swept through the hall, and the blind mother felt that Death had arrived.

"How hast thou found the way hither?" asked he. "How could'st thou arrive here more quickly than I?"

"I am a mother!" was her answer.

And Death extended his long hand towards the tiny, delicate crocus-flower; but she held her hands clasped firmly round it, so closely, so closely, and yet with such anxious care lest she should touch one of the petals. Then Death breathed upon her hands, and she felt that his breath was more chilling than the coldest, bitterest wind; and her hands sank down, numbed and powerless.

"Against me thou hast no strength!" said Death.

"But our Lord has, and He is merciful," replied she.

"I do but accomplish His will!" said Death.

"I am His gardener. I take up all His plants and trees, one by one, and transplant them into the glorious garden of paradise—into the unknown land. Where that lies, and how they thrive there, that I dare not tell thee!"

"Oh, give me back my child!" cried the mother; and she wailed and implored. All at once she seized firm hold of two pretty flowers, one with each hand, exclaiming, "I will tear off all thy flowers, for I am in despair!"

"Touch them not!" commanded Death. "Thou say'st that thou art very unhappy; and would'st thou therefore make another mother as unhappy as thyself?"

"Another mother!" repeated the poor woman, and she immediately loosed her hold of both the flowers.

"There are thine eyes again," said Death. "I fished them out of the lake, they glistened so brightly; but I did not know that they were thine. Take them back; they are now even brighter than before: now look down into this deep well. I will tell thee the names of the two flowers which thou wert about to pluck, and thou shalt see pictured in the well their whole future, the entire course of their human lives. Thou shalt see all that thou hast yearned to destroy."

And she gazed into the well; and a lovely sight it was to see how one of these lives became a blessing to the whole world, to see what a sunshine of joy and happiness it diffused around it. And she beheld the life of the other, and there were sin and sorrow, misfortune and utter misery.

"Both are God's will!" said Death.

"Which of them is the flower of unhappiness, and which the blessed and blessing one?" inquired she.

"That I will not tell thee," returned Death; "but this shalt thou learn from me, that one of those two flowers was the flower of thine own child. Thou hast seen the destiny, the future of thine own child!"

Then the mother shrieked out with terror, "Which of the two is my child? Tell me that! Save the innocent child! Release my child from all this misery; rather bear it away—bear it unto God's kingdom! Forget my tears; forget my entreaties and all that I have done!"

"I do not understand thee!" said Death. "Wilt have thy child back again, or shall I carry him away to that place which thou knowest not?"

And the mother rung her hands, fell upon her knees, and prayed to the All-wise, All-merciful Father, "Hear me not when I pray for what is not Thy will ; Thy will is always best ! Hear me not, Lord, hear me not !"

And her head drooped upon her breast.

And Death departed, and bore away her child to the unknown land.

## THE NIGHTINGALE

IN China, as you well know, the Emperor is Chinese, and all around him are Chinese also. Now what I am about to tell happened many years ago, but on that very account it is the more important that you should hear the story now, before it is forgotten.

The Emperor's palace was the most magnificent palace in the world ; it was made entirely of fine porcelain, exceedingly costly ; but, at the same time, so brittle that it was dangerous even to touch it.

The choicest flowers were to be seen in the garden ; and to the most splendid of all these, little silver bells were fastened, in order that their tinkling might prevent any one from passing by without noticing them. Yes ! everything in the Emperor's garden was well arranged ; and the garden extended so far that even the gardener did not know the end of it. Whoever walked beyond it, however, came to a beautiful wood, with very high trees ; and beyond that, to the sea.



The wood went down to the sea, which was very deep and blue : large ships could sail close under the branches ; and among the branches dwelt a nightingale who sang so sweetly that even the poor fisherman, who had so much else to do, when he came out at night-time to cast his nets, would stand still and listen to her song. " Oh, how pretty that is ! " he would say—but then he was obliged to mind his work, and forget the bird. Yet the following night, if again the nightingale sang, and the fisherman came out, again he would say, " Oh, how pretty that is ! "

Travellers came from all parts of the world to the Emperor's city ; and they admired the city, the palace, and the garden ; but, if they heard the nightingale, they all said, " This is the best." And they talked about her after they went home, and learned men wrote books about the city, the palace, and the garden. Nor did they forget the nightingale : she was extolled above everything else ; and poets wrote the most beautiful verses about the nightingale of the wood near the sea.

These books went round the world, and one of them at last reached the Emperor. He was sitting in his golden arm-chair ; he read and read, and nodded his head every moment ; for these splendid descriptions of the city, the palace, and the garden, pleased him greatly. " But the nightingale is the best of all," was written in the book.

" What in the world is this ? " said the Emperor. " The nightingale ! I do not know it at all ! Can there be such a bird in my empire, in my garden even, without my having even heard

of it? Truly, one may learn something from books."

So he called his Cavalier, or gentleman in waiting. Now this was so grand a person that no one of inferior rank might speak to him; and if one did venture to ask him a question, his only answer was "Psha!" which has no particular meaning.

"There is said to be a very remarkable bird here, called the nightingale," said the Emperor; "her song, they say, is worth more than anything else in all my dominions. Why has no one ever told me of her?"

"I have never before heard her mentioned," said the Cavalier; "she has never been presented at court."

"I wish her to come and sing before me this evening," said the Emperor. "The whole world knows what I have, and I do not know it myself!"

"I have never before heard her mentioned," said the Cavalier; "but I will seek her, I will find her."

But where was she to be found? The Cavalier ran up one flight of steps, down another, through halls, and through passages; not one of all whom he met had ever heard of the nightingale. And the Cavalier returned to the Emperor, and said, "It must certainly be an invention of the man who wrote the book. Your Imperial Majesty must not believe all that is written in books; much in them is pure invention, and there is what is called the Black Art."

"But the book in which I have read it," said the Emperor, "was sent to me by the high and mighty Emperor of Japan, and therefore it can-

not be untrue. I wish to hear the nightingale ; she must be here this evening, and if she did not come, after supper the whole court shall be flogged."

"Tsing-pe !" said the Cavalier ; and again he ran upstairs, and downstairs, through halls, and through passages, and half the court ran with him ; for not one would have relished the flogging. Many were the questions asked respecting the wonderful nightingale whom the whole world talked of, and about whom no one at court knew anything.

At last they met a poor little girl in the kitchen who said, "Oh yes ! the nightingale ! I know her very well. Oh, how she can sing ! Every evening I carry the fragments left at table to my poor sick mother. She lives by the seashore ; and when I am coming back, and stay to rest a little in the wood, I hear the nightingale sing ; it makes the tears come into my eyes ! It is just as if my mother kissed me."

"Little kitchen-maiden," said the Cavalier, "I will procure for you a sure appointment in the kitchen, together with permission to see His Majesty the Emperor dine, if you will conduct us to the nightingale, for she is expected at court this evening."

So they went together to the wood where the nightingale was accustomed to sing ; and half the court went with them. Whilst on their way, a cow began to low.

"Oh," said the court pages, "now we have her ! It is certainly an extraordinary voice for so small an animal ; surely I have heard it somewhere before."

"No, those are cows you hear lowing," said the little kitchen-maid ; " we are still far from the place."

The frogs were now croaking in the pond.

"That is famous !" said the chief court-preacher. " Now I hear her ; it sounds just like little church-bells."

"No, those are frogs," said the little kitchen-maid, " but now I think we shall soon hear her."

Then began the nightingale to sing.

"There she is !" said the little girl. " Listen ! listen ! There she sits ;" and she pointed to a little grey bird up in the branches.

"Is it possible ?" said the Cavalier. " I should not have thought it. How simple she looks ! she must certainly have changed colour at the sight of so many distinguished personages."

"Little nightingale !" called out the kitchen-maid, " our gracious Emperor wishes you to sing something to him."

"With the greatest pleasure," said the nightingale ; and she sang in such a manner that it was delightful to hear her.

"It sounds like glass bells," said the Cavalier. " And look at her little throat, how it moves ! It is singular that we should never have heard her before ; she will have great success at court."

"Shall I sing again to the Emperor ?" asked the nightingale, for she thought the Emperor was among them.

"Most excellent nightingale !" said the Cavalier, " I have the honour to invite you to a court festival, which is to take place this evening, when His Imperial Majesty will be enchanted with your delightful song."

"My song would sound far better among the green trees," said the nightingale ; however, she followed willingly when she heard that the Emperor wished it.

There was a regular decorating and polishing at the palace ; the walls and the floors, which were all of porcelain, glittered with a thousand gold lamps ; the loveliest flowers, with the merriest tinkling bells, were placed in the passages : there was a running to and fro, which made all the bells ring, so that one could not hear his own words.

In the midst of the grand hall where the Emperor sat a golden perch was erected, on which the nightingale was to sit. The whole court was present, and the little kitchen-mâid received permission to stand behind the door, for she had now actually the rank and title of " Maid of the Kitchen." All were dressed out in their finest clothes ; and all eyes were fixed upon the little grey bird, to whom the Emperor nodded as a signal for her to begin.

And the nightingale sang so sweetly that tears rolled down his cheeks ; and the nightingale sang more sweetly still, and touched the hearts of all who heard her. And the Emperor was so merry that he said, " The nightingale should have his golden slippers, and wear them round her neck." But the nightingale thanked him, and said she was already sufficiently rewarded.

" I have seen tears in the Emperor's eyes, and that is the greatest reward I can have. The tears of an Emperor have a particular value. Heaven knows I am sufficiently rewarded." And then she sang again with her sweet, lovely voice.

"It is the most amiable coquetry ever known," said the ladies present ; and they put water into their mouths, and tried to move their throats as she did, when they spoke ; they thought to become nightingales also. Indeed, even the footmen and chamber-maids declared that they were quite contented ; which was a great thing to say, for of all people they are the most difficult to satisfy.

Yes, indeed ! the nightingale's success was complete. She was now to remain at court, to have her own cage ; with leave to fly out twice in the day, and once in the night. Twelve attendants were allotted her, who were to hold a silken band, fastened round her foot ; and they kept good hold ; but there was no pleasure in excursions made in this manner.

All the city was talking of the wonderful bird ; and when two persons met, one would say only "night," and the other "gale," and then they sighed, and understood each other perfectly. Indeed, eleven of the children of the citizens were named after the nightingale, but none of them had her tones in their throats.

One day a large parcel arrived for the Emperor, on which was written "Nightingale."

"Here we have another new book about our far-famed bird," said the Emperor. But it was not a book ; it was a little piece of mechanism lying in a box—an artificial nightingale, which was intended to look like the living one, but which was covered all over with diamonds, rubies, sapphires. When this artificial bird had been wound up, it could sing one of the tunes that the real nightingale sang ; and its tail, all glittering



with silver and gold, went up and down all the time. A little band was fastened round its neck, on which was written, "The nightingale of the Emperor of China is poor compared with the nightingale of the Emperor of Japan."

"That is famous!" said every one; and he who had brought the bird obtained the title of "Chief Imperial Nightingale Bringer." "Now they will sing together; we will have a duet."

And so they must sing together; but it did not succeed, for the real nightingale sang in her own way, and the artificial bird produced its tones by wheels. "It is not his fault," said the artist; "he keeps exact time and quite according to method."

So the artificial bird must now sing alone: he was quite as successful as the real nightingale; and then he was so much prettier to look at; his plumage sparkled like jewels.

Three and thirty times he sang one and the same tune, and yet he was not weary; every one would willingly have heard him again. However, the Emperor now wished the real nightingale should sing something—but where was she? No one had remarked that she had flown out of the open window—flown away to her own green wood.

"What is the meaning of this?" said the Emperor; and all the courtiers abused the nightingale, and called her a most ungrateful creature. "We have the best bird at all events," said they; and for the four and thirtieth time they heard the same tune, but still they did not quite know it, because it was so difficult. The artist praised the bird very highly; indeed, he declared

it was superior to the real nightingale, not only in its exterior, all sparkling with diamonds, but also internally. ,

"For see, my noble lords, His Imperial Majesty especially, with the real nightingale one could never reckon on what was coming : but everything is settled with the artificial bird ; he will sing in this one way, and no other. This can be proved ; he can be taken to pieces, and the works can be shown—where the wheels lie, how they move, and how one follows from another.

"That is just what I think," said everybody ; and the artist received permission to show the bird to the people on the following Sunday. "They too should hear him sing," the Emperor said.

So they heard him, and were as well pleased as if they had all been drinking tea—for it is tea that makes Chinese merry ; and they all said, "Oh !" and raised their forefingers, and nodded their heads. But the fisherman, who had heard the real nightingale, said, "It sounds very pretty, almost like the real bird ; but yet there is something wanting, I do not know what."

The real nightingale was, however, banished from the empire.

The artificial bird had his place on a silken cushion, close to the Emperor's bed ; all the presents he received, gold and precious stones, lay around him. He had obtained the rank and title of "High Imperial Dessert Singer," and therefore his place was number one on the left side ; for the Emperor thought that the side where the heart was situated must be the most honourable—and the heart is situated on the

left side of an Emperor, as well as with other folks.

And the artist wrote five and twenty volumes about the artificial bird, with the longest and most difficult words that are to be found in the Chinese language. So, of course, all said they had read and understood them, otherwise they would have been stupid, and perhaps they would have been flogged.

Thus it went on for a year. The Emperor, the court, and all the Chinese knew every note of the artificial bird's song by heart ; but that was the very reason they enjoyed it so much, they could now sing with him. The little boys in the street sang "zizizi, cluck, cluck, cluck !" and the Emperor himself sang too—yes, indeed, that was charming !

But one evening when the bird was in full voice, and the Emperor lay in bed—and listened, there was suddenly a noise—"bang"—inside the bird, then something sprang—"fur-r-r-r" ; all the wheels were running about, and the music stopped.

The Emperor jumped quickly out of bed, and had his chief physician called ; but of what use could he be ? Then a clockmaker was sent for, and, at last, after a great deal of discussion and consultation, the bird was in some measure put to rights again. But the clockmaker said he must be spared much singing, for the pegs were almost worn out, and it was impossible to renew them, at least so that the music should be correct.

There was great lamentation, for now the artificial bird was allowed to sing only once a year, and even then there were difficulties. How-

ever, the artist made a short speech full of his long words, and said the bird was as good as ever : so then, of course, it was as good as ever.

When five years had passed away, a great trouble befell the whole empire, for in their hearts the people thought highly of their Emperor ; and now he was ill, and it was reported that he could not live. A new Emperor had already been chosen, and the people stood in the street, outside the palace, and asked the Cavalier how the Emperor was ?

“ Psha ! ” said he, and shook his head.

Cold and pale lay the Emperor in his magnificent bed ; all the court believed him to be already dead, and every one had hastened away to greet the new Emperor ; the men ran out for a little gossip on the subject, and the maids were having a grand coffee-party.

The floors of all the rooms and passages were covered with cloth, in order that not a step should be heard—it was everywhere so still ! so still ! But the Emperor was not yet dead ; stiff and pale he lay in his splendid bed, with the long velvet curtains, and heavy gold tassels. A window was opened above, and the moon shone down on the Emperor and the artificial bird.

The poor Emperor could scarcely breathe ; it appeared to him as if something was sitting on his chest ; he opened his eyes and saw that it was Death, who had put on the Emperor's crown, and with one hand held the golden scimitar, with the other the splendid imperial banner. From under the folds of the thick velvet hangings the strangest-looking heads were seen peering forth ; some with an expression absolutely

hideous, and others with an extremely gentle and lovely aspect. They were the bad and good deeds of the Emperor, which were now all fixing their eyes upon him, whilst Death sat on his heart.

"Dost thou know this?" they whispered one after another. "Dost thou remember that? And they began reproaching him in such a manner that the sweat broke out upon his forehead.

"I have never known anything like it," said the Emperor. "Music, music, the Great Chinese drum!" cried he. "Let me not hear what they are saying."

They went on, however; and Death, quite in the Chinese fashion, nodded his head to every word.

"Music, music!" cried the Emperor. "Thou dear little artificial bird! sing, I pray thee, sing! I have given thee gold and precious stones; I have even hung my golden slippers round thy neck. Sing, I pray thee, sing!"

But the bird was silent; there was no one there to wind him up, and he could not sing without this. Death continued to stare at the Emperor with his great hollow eyes, and everywhere it was still, fearfully still!

All at once the sweetest song was heard from the window; it was the little living nightingale, who was sitting on a branch outside. She had heard of her Emperor's severe illness, and was come to sing to him of comfort and hope. As she sang, the spectral forms became paler and paler, the blood flowed more and more quickly through the Emperor's feeble members, and even Death listened, and said, "Go on, little nightingale, go on."

"Wilt thou give me the splendid gold scimitar? Wilt thou give me the gay banner, and the Emperor's crown?"

And Death gave up all these treasures for a song; and the nightingale sang on. She sang of the quiet church-yard, where white roses blossom, where the lilac sends forth its fragrance, and the fresh grass is bedewed with the tears of the sorrowing friends of the departed. Then Death was seized with a longing after his garden, and like a cold white shadow, flew out at the window.

"Thanks, thanks," said the Emperor, "thou heavenly little bird, I know thee well. I have banished thee from my realm, and thou hast sung away those evil faces from my bed, and death from my heart; how shall I reward thee?"

"Thou hast already rewarded me," said the nightingale; "I have seen tears in thine eyes, as when I sang to thee for the first time. Those I shall never forget; they are jewels which do so much good to a minstrel's heart! But sleep now, and wake fresh and healthy; I will sing thee to sleep."

And she sang, and the Emperor fell into a sweet sleep. Oh, how soft and kindly was that sleep!

The sun shone in at the window when he awoke, strong and healthy. Not one of his servants had returned, for they all believed him dead; but the nightingale still sat and sang.

"Thou shalt always stay with me," said the Emperor; "thou shalt sing only when it pleases thee; and the artificial bird I will break into a thousand pieces."

"Do not so," said the nightingale; "truly



he has done what he could ; take care of him. I cannot stay in the palace ; but let me come when I like : I will sit on the branches close to the window, in the evening, and sing to thee, that thou mayest become happy and thoughtful.

"I will sing to thee of the joyful and the sorrowing ; I will sing to thee of all that is good or bad, which is concealed from thee. The little minstrel flies afar to the fisherman's hut, to the peasant's cottage, to all who are far distant from thee and thy court. I love thy heart more than thy crown, and yet the crown has an odour of something holy about it. I will come ; I will sing : but thou must promise me one thing."

"Everything," said the Emperor. And now he stood in his imperial splendour, which he had put on himself, and held the scimitar, so heavy with gold, to his heart.

"One thing I beg of thee : let no one know that thou hast a little bird, who tells thee everything ; then all will go on well." And the nightingale flew away.

The attendants came in to look at their dead Emperor, and lo ! as there they stood, the Emperor said, "Good-morning !"

## LITTLE IDA'S FLOWERS

"My flowers are quite faded," said little Ida. "Only yesterday evening they were so pretty, and now they are all drooping! What can be the reason of it?" asked she of the student who was sitting on the sofa, and who was a great favourite with her, because she used to tell her stories, and cut out all sorts of pretty things for her in paper—such as hearts with little ladies dancing in them, flowers, high castles with open doors, etc. "Why do these flowers look so deplorable?" asked she again, showing him a bouquet of faded flowers.

"Do you not know?" replied the student. "Your flowers went to a ball last night, and are tired; that is why they all hang their heads."

"Surely flowers cannot dance!" exclaimed little Ida.

"Of course they can dance! When it is dark, and we have all gone to bed, they jump about as merrily as possible. They have a ball almost every night."

"May children go to the ball too?" asked Ida.

"Yes," said the student; "daisies and lilies of the valley."

"And where do the prettiest flowers dance?"

"Have you never been in the large garden in front of the King's beautiful summer palace—the garden so full of flowers? Surely you remember the swans that come swimming up to you, when you throw them crumbs of bread? There you may imagine they have splendid balls."

"I was there yesterday with my mother," said Ida; "but there were no leaves on the trees, neither did I see a single flower. What could have become of them? There were so many in the summer-time!"

"They are now at the palace," answered the student. "As soon as the King leaves his summer residence, and returns with all his courts to the town, the flowers likewise hasten out of the garden and into the palace, where they enjoy themselves famously. Oh, if you could but see them!"

"The two loveliest roses sit on the throne, and act King and Queen. The red cocks-combs then arrange themselves in rows before them, bowing very low; they are the gentlemen of the bed-chamber. After that the prettiest among the flowers come in, and open the ball. The blue violets represent midshipmen, and begin dancing with the hyacinths and crocuses, who take the part of young ladies. The tulips and the tall orange-lilies are old dowagers, whose business it is to see that everything goes on with perfect propriety."

"But," asked the astonished little Ida, "may the flowers give their ball in the King's palace?"

"No one knows anything about it," replied the student. "Perhaps once during the night the old chamberlain may come in, with his great bunch of keys, to see that all is right; but as soon as the flowers hear the clanking of the keys they are quite still, and hide themselves behind the long silk window curtains. 'I smell flowers here,' says the old chamberlain; but he is not able to find them."

"That is very funny," said Ida, clapping her little hands; "but could not I see the flowers?"

"To be sure you can see them!" returned the student. "You have only to peep in at the window next time you go to the palace. I did so to-day, and saw a long yellow lily lying on the sofa. That was a court lady."

"Can the flowers in the Botanic Gardens go there too? Can they go so far?" asked Ida.

"Certainly, for flowers can fly if they wish. The pretty red and yellow butterflies, which look so much like flowers, are, in fact, nothing else. They jump from their stalks, move their petals, as if they were little wings, and fly about. As a reward for always behaving themselves well, they are allowed, instead of sitting quietly on their stalks, to flutter hither and thither all day long, till wings actually grow out of their petals. You have often seen it yourself.

"For the rest, it may be that the flowers in the Botanic Gardens have not heard what merry-making goes on every night at the palace. But I assure you, if, next time you go into the garden, you whisper to one of the flowers that a ball is to be given at night at Friedrichsburg, the news will be repeated from flower to flower, and there they will all fly to a certainty. Then, should the professor come into the garden, and find all his flowers gone, he will not be able to imagine what is become of them."

"Indeed!" said Ida, rather vexed at the student's strange words. "And, pray, how can the flowers repeat to each other what I say to them? I am sure that flowers cannot speak."

"No, they cannot speak; you are right there,"

returned the student ; " but they make themselves understood by means of pantomime. Have you never seen them move to and fro at the least breath of air ? They can understand each other this way as well as we can by talking."

" And does the professor understand their pantomime ? " asked Ida.

" Oh, certainly ! One morning he came into the garden, and observed that a tall nettle was conversing in pantomime with a pretty red carnation. ' Thou art so beautiful,' said he to the carnation ; ' and I love thee so much ! ' But the professor could not allow such things ; so he gave a rap at the nettle's leaves, which are his fingers, and in doing so he stung himself, and since then has never dared to touch a nettle."

" Ah ha ! " laughed little Ida ; " that was very foolish."

" What do you mean by this ? " here interrupted the tedious counsellor, who had come on a visit ; " putting such things into children's heads."

He could not endure the student, and always used to scold when he saw him cutting out paste-board figures—as, for instance, a man on the gallows holding a heart in his hand, which was meant for a heart-stealer ; or an old witch, riding on a broomstick, and carrying her husband on the tip of her nose. He used always to say then as now : " What do you mean by putting such rubbish into children's heads ? It is all nonsensical rubbish ! "

However, little Ida thought what the student told her about the flowers was very strange, and she could not help thinking of it. She was now

sure that her flowers hung their heads because they were tired with dancing so much the night before ; so she took them to the pretty little table, where her playthings were arranged. Her doll lay sleeping in the cradle, but Ida said to her, " You must get up, Sophy, and be content to sleep to-night in the table-drawer, for the poor flowers are ill, and must sleep in your bed ; perhaps they will be well again by to-morrow." She then took the doll out of the bed ; but the good lady looked vexed at having to give up her cradle to the flowers.

Ida then laid the faded flowers in her doll's bed, drew the covering over them, and told them to lie quite still, whilst she made some tea for them to drink, in order that they might be well again the next day. And she drew the curtains round the bed, so that the sun might not dazzle their eyes.

All evening she thought of nothing but the student's words ; and just before she went to bed, she ran up to the window, where her mother's tulips and hyacinths stood behind the blinds, and whispered to them, " I know very well that you are going to a ball to-night." But the flowers moved not a leaf, and seemed not to have heard her.

After she was in bed, she thought for a long time how delightful it must be to see the flowers dancing in the palace, and said to herself, " I wonder whether my flowers have been there ? " but before she could settle the point she fell asleep.

During the night she awoke ; she had been dreaming of the student and the flowers, and of the counsellor who told her that they were



making game of her. All was still in the room ; the night lamp was burning on the table ; and her father and mother were both asleep.

"I wonder whether my flowers are still lying in Sophy's bed?" said she. "I should very much like to know." She raised herself a little, looked towards the door, which stood half open ; she saw that the flowers and all her playthings were just as she had left them. She listened, and it seemed to her as if some one must be playing on the piano ; but the tones were lower and sweeter than she had ever heard before. "Now my flowers must certainly be dancing," said she.

"Oh, how I should like to see them !" but she dared not get up for fear of waking her father and mother. "If they would only come in here !" Still the flowers did not come ; and the piano sounded so sweetly. At last she could restrain herself no longer, she must see the dancing ; so she crept lightly out of bed, and stole towards the door of the room. Oh, what wonderful things she saw then !

The night lamp was burning no longer. However, it was quite light in the room, for the moon shone brightly through the windows on the floor. All the hyacinths and tulips stood there in two rows, whilst their empty pots might still be seen in front of the windows ; they performed figures, and took hold of each other by the leaves. At the piano sat a large yellow lily, which Ida fancied she must have seen before, for she remembered the student's saying that this flower was exceedingly like Miss Laura, and how every one had laughed at his remark. Now she herself agreed

that the lily did resemble this young lady, for she had exactly her way of playing, bowing her long yellow face now to one side, now to the other, and nodding her head to mark the time.

A tall blue crocus now stepped forward, sprang upon the table, on which lay Ida's playthings, went straight up to the bed, and drew back the curtains. There lay the sick flowers ; but they arose immediately, and greeted the other flowers, who invited them to dance with them. The sick flowers got up, appeared quite well again, and danced as merrily as the rest.

Suddenly a heavy noise as of something falling from the table was heard. Ida cast a glance that way, and saw that it was the rod which she had found on her bed on the morning of Shrove Tuesday, and which was desirous of ranking itself among the flowers. It was certainly a very pretty rod, for a wax doll was fixed on the top, wearing a hat as broad-brimmed as the counselor's, with a blue and red ribbon tied round it. She hopped upon her three red stilts in the middle of the flowers, and stamped the floor merrily with her feet : she was dancing the Mazurka, which the flowers could not dance, they were so light-footed.

All at once the wax doll on the rod swelled out to a giant, tall and broad, and exclaimed in a loud voice, " What do you mean by putting such things into children's heads ? It is all nonsensical rubbish ! "

And now the doll looked as much like the counselor in his broad-brimmed hat, as one drop of water resembles another ; her countenance looked as yellow and peevish as his ; the paper

flowers on the rod, however, pinched her thin legs, and she shrunk up to her original size.

The little Ida thought this scene so droll that she could not help laughing; the company, however, did not notice it, for the rod continued to stamp about, till at last the doll-counsellor was obliged to dance too, whether she would or no, and make herself now thin, now thick, now tall, now short, till at last the flowers interceded for her, and the rod then left her in peace.

A loud knocking was now heard from the drawer in which lay Ida's doll. It was Sophy who made the noise. She put her head out of the drawer and asked in great astonishment, "Is there a ball here? Why has no one told me of it?"

"Will you dance with me?" asked the nut-crackers.

"Certainly; you are a very fit person to dance with me!" said Sophy, turning her back to him. She then sat down on the table, expecting that one of the flowers would come and ask her to dance; but no one came. She coughed—"Hem! hem!" Still no one came. Meantime the nut-crackers danced by himself, and his steps were not at all badly made.

As no flowers came forward to ask Sophy to dance, all at once she let herself fall down upon the floor, which excited a general commotion, so that all the flowers ran up to ask her whether she had hurt herself; but she had received no injury. The flowers, however, were all very polite, especially Ida's flowers, who took the opportunity of thanking her for the comfortable bed in which they had slept so quietly, and then

seized her hands to dance with her, whilst all the other flowers stood in a circle round them. Sophy was now quite happy, and begged Ida's flowers to make use of her bed again after the ball, as she did not at all mind sleeping one night in the table-drawer.

But the flowers said, "We owe you many thanks for your kindness, but we shall not live long enough to need it, as we shall be dead by to-morrow. But ask the little Ida to bury us in the garden near her canary-bird; then we shall grow again next summer, and be even more beautiful than we have been this year."

"No, you must not die!" replied Sophy warmly, as she kissed the flowers. Just then the door was suddenly opened, and a number of flowers danced into the room. Ida could not imagine where these flowers came from, unless from the King's garden. First of all, entered two beautiful roses wearing golden crowns; then followed stocks and pinks, bowing to the company on all sides.

They had also a band of music with them; great poppies and peonies blew upon the shells of peas till they were quite red in the face, whilst blue and white campanulas rang a merry peal of bells. These were followed by an immense number of different flowers all dancing—violets, daisies, lilies of the valley, narcissi, and others, who all moved so gracefully that it was delightful to see them.

At last these happy flowers wished one another "good-night"; so little Ida once more crept into bed, to dream of all the beautiful things she had seen.

The next morning, as soon as she was up and dressed, she went to her little table to see if her flowers were there. She drew aside the bed-curtains—yes ! there lay the flowers, but they were to-day much more faded than yesterday ; Sophy, too, was lying in the drawer, but she looked uncommonly sleepy.

“ Can you not remember what you have to say to me ? ” asked little Ida of her ; but Sophy made a most stupid face, and answered not a syllable. “ You are not at all good ! ” said she, “ and yet all the flowers let you dance with them. ” She then chose out from her playthings a little pasteboard box with birds painted on it, and therein she placed the faded flowers. “ That shall be your coffin, ” said she ; “ and when my Norwegian cousins come to see me, they shall go with me to bury you in the garden, so that next summer you may bloom again, and be still more beautiful than you have been this year. ”

The two Norwegian cousins of whom she spoke were two lively boys, called Jonas and Ebsen. Their father had given them two new cross-bows, which they brought with them to show Ida. She then told them of the poor flowers that were dead, and were to be buried in the garden. The two boys walked in front with their bows slung across their shoulders, and little Ida followed, carrying the dead flowers in their pretty coffin. A grave was dug for them in the garden. Ida kissed the flowers once more, then laid the box down in the hollow, and Jonas and Ebsen shot arrows over the grave with their cross-bows, for they had neither guns nor cannons.

## THE SWINEHERD

THERE was once a poor Prince, who had a kingdom ; it was very small, but still quite large enough to marry upon ; and he wished to marry.

It was certainly rather cool of him to say to the Emperor's daughter, " Will you have me ? " But so he did ; for his name was renowned far and wide ; and there were a hundred princesses who would have answered " Yes ! " and " Thank you kindly." We shall see what this Princess said.

Listen !

It happened that where the Prince's father lay buried, there grew a rose-tree—a most beautiful rose-tree, which blossomed only once in every five years, and even then bore only one flower. But that *was* a rose ! It smelt so sweet that all cares and sorrows were forgotten by him who inhaled its fragrance.

And furthermore the Prince had a nightingale who could sing in such a manner that it seemed as if all sweet melodies dwelt in her little throat. So the Princess was to have the rose and the nightingale ; and they were accordingly put into large silver caskets, and sent to her.

The Emperor had them brought into a large hall, where the Princess was playing at " Visiting," with the ladies of the court ; and when she saw the caskets with the presents, she clapped her hands for joy.

" Ah, if it were but a little pussy-cat ! " said she ; but the rose-tree, with its beautiful rose, came to view.



"Oh, how prettily it is made!" said the court-ladies.

"It is more than pretty," said the Emperor; "it is charming!"

But the Princess touched it, and was almost ready to cry. "Fie, papa!" said she, "it is not made at all, it is natural!"

"Let us see what is in the other casket, before we get into a bad humour," said the Emperor. So the nightingale came forth, and sang so delightfully that at first no one could say anything ill-humoured of her.

"*Superbe! charmant!*" exclaimed the ladies; for they all used to chatter French, each one worse than her neighbour.

"How much the bird reminds me of the musical box that belonged to our blessed Empress," said an old knight. "Oh, yes! these are the same tones; this is the same style of execution."

"Yes! yes!" said the Emperor, and he wept like a child at the remembrance.

"I will still hope that it is not a real bird," said the Princess.

"Yes, it is a real bird," said those who had brought it.

"Well, then, let the bird fly," said the Princess; and she positively refused to see the Prince.

However, he was not to be discouraged; he daubed his face over brown and black; pulled his cap over his ears, and knocked at the door.

"Good-day to my lord the Emperor!" said he. "Can I have employment at the palace?"

"Why, yes," said the Emperor; "I want some one to take care of the pigs, for we have a great many of them."

So the Prince was appointed "Imperial Swineherd." He had a dirty little room close by the pig-sty, and there he sat the whole day and worked. By the evening, he had made a pretty little kitchen-pot ; little bells were hung all round it ; and when the pot was boiling, those bells tinkled in the most charming manner, and played the old melody—

"Ach ! du lieber Augustin,  
Alles ist weg, weg, weg !" \*

But what was still more curious, whoever held his finger in the smoke of the kitchen-pot immediately smelt all the dishes that were cooking on every hearth in the city—and this, you see, was something quite different from the rose.

Now the Princess happened to walk that way ; and when she heard the tune she stood quite still, and seemed pleased ; for she could play "Lieber Augustin." It was the only piece she knew ; and she played it with one finger.

"Why, there is my piece," said the Princess ; "that swineherd must certainly have been well educated ! Go in and ask him the price of the instrument."

So one of the court-ladies had to run in ; however, she drew on wooden slippers first.

"What will you take for the kitchen-pot ?" said the lady.

"I will have ten kisses from the Princess," said the swineherd.

"Yes, indeed !" said the lady.

\* "Ah ! dear Augustine !  
All is gone, gone, gone !"

"I cannot sell it for less," rejoined the swineherd.

"He is an impudent fellow!" said the Princess, and she walked on; but when she had gone a little way, the bells tinkled so prettily—

"Ach! du lieber Augustin,  
Alles ist weg, weg, weg!"

"Stay," said the Princess. "Ask him if he will have ten kisses from the ladies of my court."

"No, thank you!" said the swineherd; "ten kisses from the Princess, or I keep the kitchen-pot myself."

"That must not be either!" said the Princess; "but do you all stand before me, that no one may see us."

And the court-ladies placed themselves in front of her, and spread out their dresses. The swineherd got ten kisses, and the Princess—the kitchen-pot.

That was delightful! The pot was boiling the whole evening, and the whole of the following day. They knew perfectly well what was cooking at every fire throughout the city, from the chamberlain's to the cobbler's: the court ladies danced, and clapped their hands.

"We know who has soup, and who has pancakes for dinner to-day; who has cutlets, and who has eggs. How interesting!"

"Yes, but keep my secret, for I am an Emperor's daughter."

The swineherd—that is to say, the Prince, for no one knew that he was other than an ill-favoured swineherd—did not let a day pass without working at something. He at last constructed a

rattle, which, when it was swung round, played all the waltzes and jig tunes which have ever been heard since the creation of the world.

"Ah, that is *superbe* !" said the Princess when she passed by. "I have never heard prettier compositions ! Go in and ask him the price of the instrument ; but mind, he shall have no more kisses !"

"He will have a hundred kisses from the Princess !" said the lady who had been to ask.

"I think he is not in his right senses !" said the Princess, and walked on ; but when she had gone a little way, she stopped again. "One must encourage art," said she. "I am the Emperor's daughter. Tell him he shall, as on yesterday, have ten kisses from me and may take the rest from the ladies of the court."

"Oh ! but we should not like that at all !" said they.

"What are you muttering?" asked the Princess. "If I can kiss him, surely you can ! Remember that you owe everything to me." So the ladies were obliged to go to him again.

"A hundred kisses from the Princess !" said he, "or else let every one keep his own."

"Stand round !" said she ; and all the ladies stood round her whilst the kissing was going on.

"What can be the reason for such a crowd close by the pig-sty ?" said the Emperor, who happened just then to step out on the balcony : he rubbed his eyes and put on his spectacles. "They are the ladies of the court ; I must go down and see what they are about !" So he pulled up his slippers at the heel, for he had trodden them down.

As soon as he had got into the courtyard, he moved very softly ; and the ladies were so much engrossed with counting the kisses, that all might go on fairly that they did not perceive the Emperor. He rose on his tip-toes.

"What is all this ?" said he, when he saw what was going on ; and he boxed the Princess's ears with his slipper, just as the swineherd was taking the eighty-sixth kiss.

"March out !" said the Emperor, for he was very angry ; and both Princess and swineherd were thrust out of the city.

The Princess now stood and wept ; the swineherd scolded ; and the rain poured down.

"Alas ! unhappy creature that I am," said the Princess. "If I had but married the handsome young Prince ! Ah, how unfortunate I am !"

And the swineherd went behind a tree, washed the black and brown colour from his face, threw off his dirty clothes, and stepped forth in his princely robes ; he looked so noble that the Princess could not help bowing before him.

"I am come to despise thee," said he. "Thou would'st not have an honourable prince ! thou could'st not prize the rose and the nightingale, but thou wast ready to kiss the swineherd for the sake of a trumpery plaything. Thou art rightly served."

He then went back to his own little kingdom, and shut the door of his palace in her face. Now she might well sing—

"Ach ! du lieber Augustin,  
Alles ist weg, weg, weg !"

## THE DUSTMAN

THERE is no one in the whole world who knows so many stories as the Dustman. Oh ! his are delightful stories.

In the evening, when children are sitting quietly at table, or on their little stools, he takes off his shoes, comes softly upstairs, opens the door very gently, and all on a sudden throws dust into the children's eyes. He then glides behind them, and breathes lightly, very lightly, upon their necks, and their heads become, oh, so heavy ! But it does them no harm, for the Dustman means it kindly ; he only wants the children to be quiet, and they are most quiet when they are in bed. They must be quiet, in order that he may tell them his stories.

When the children are asleep, the Dustman sits down upon the bed ; he is gaily dressed, and his coat is of silk ; but of what colour it is impossible to say, for it seems now green, now red, now blue, according to the light. Under each arm he holds an umbrella ; one, which has pictures painted on it, he holds over good children : it makes them have the most delightful dreams all night long. The other, which has nothing on it, he holds over naughty children, so that they sleep heavily, and awake in the morning without having dreamed at all.

Now let us hear what stories the Dustman told to a little boy, of the name of Hjalmar, to whom he came every evening for a whole week through.



There are seven stories altogether, for the week has seven days.

### MONDAY

"Listen to me," said the Dustman, as soon as he had got Hialmar into bed. "Now I will decorate your room ;" and all at once, as he was speaking, the flowers in the flower-pots grew up into large trees, whose long branches reached to the ceiling, and along the walls, so that the room looked like a beautiful arbour. All these branches were full of flowers, and every flower was more beautiful than the rose, and had such a pleasant smell.

Moreover, could you have tasted them, you would have found them sweeter than preserves. And fruit, which shone like gold, hung from the trees ; also dumplings full of currants : never was the like seen before. But, at the same time, a loud wailing was heard in the table-drawer, where Hialmar's school-books were kept.

"What is the matter ?" said the Dustman, going up to the table, and taking out the drawer. There lay the slate, on which the figures were pressing and squeezing together, because a wrong figure had got into the sum. The pencil hopped and skipped about like a little dog ; he wanted to help the sum, but he could not.

And a little farther off lay Hialmar's copy-book. A complaining and moaning came thence also, which was quiet unpleasant to hear : at the beginning of every line on each page, there stood a large letter with a little letter by its side. This was the copy ; and after them stood other little

letters intended to look like the copy. Hialmar had written these ; but they seemed to have fallen over the lines, upon which they ought to have stood. .

"Look, this is the way you must hold yourselves," said the copy ; "look, slanting just so, and turning round with a jerk."

"Oh ! we would do so willingly," said Hialmar's letters ; "but we cannot, we are so badly made."

"Then you shall have some of the children's powders," said the Dustman.

"Oh no !" cried they, and stood so straight that it was a pleasure to see them.

"Well, I cannot tell you any more stories now," said the Dustman ; "I must drill these letters—right, left, right, left !" So he drilled the letters till they looked as straight and perfect as only the letters in a copy can be. However, after the Dustman had gone away, and when Hialmar looked at them the next morning, they were as miserable and badly formed as before.

## TUESDAY

As soon as Hialmar was in bed, the Dustman touched, with his little magic wand, all the pieces of furniture in the room ; whereupon they all began to talk. They all talked about themselves, except the spittoon, who stood quite still, and was much vexed at their being so vain—all talking about themselves, without ever thinking of him who stood so modestly in the corner, and suffered himself to be spat upon.

Over the wardrobe there hung a large picture

in a gilt frame ; it was a landscape. There you might see tall trees, flowers blossoming in the grass, and a river that wound round the wood, passing many a grand old castle on its way to the sea.

The Dustman touched the picture with his magic wand, and immediately the birds began to sing, the boughs of the trees waved to and fro, and the clouds actually flew ; one could see their shadows move over the landscape.

The Dustman then lifted little Hialmar up to the frame, and Hialmar put his legs into the picture. There he stood amid the tall grass. He ran to the water's edge, and sat down in a little boat, painted red and white, with sails glittering like silver ; six swans, with golden wreaths round their necks, and bright blue stars upon their heads, drew the boat along, near a green wood, where the trees were telling stories about robbers and witches, and the flowers were talking of the pretty little fairies, and what the butterflies had said to them.

Beautiful fishes, with scales like gold and silver, swam behind the boat, every now and then leaping up, so that the water was splashed over Hialmar's head ; birds red and blue, great and small, flew after him in two long rows ; the gnats danced, and the cockchafers said " Boom, boom ! " They all wished to accompany Hialmar, and every one of them had a story to tell.

A pleasant voyage was that ! The woods were now thick and gloomy, now like beautiful gardens beaming with flowers and sunshine. Large palaces built of glass or marble rose from among the trees ; young princesses stood in the balconies

—they were all little girls whom Hialmar knew well, and with whom he had often played. They stretched out their hands to him, each holding a pretty little image made of sugar, such as are seen in confectioners' shops. Hialmar seized the end of one of these little images as he sailed by, and a princess kept hold of the other ; so each got half—the princess the smaller, Hialmar the larger.

At every castle little princes were keeping guard ; they shouldered their golden scimitars, and showered down raisins and tin soldiers—these were true princes ! Hialmar sailed sometimes through woods, sometimes through large halls, or the middle of a town. Among others he passed through the town where his nurse lived, she who had brought him up from his infancy, and who loved him so much. She nodded and beckoned to him as he passed by, and sang the pretty verses she had herself composed and sent to him.

“ How many, many hours I think on thee,  
My own dear Hialmar, still my pride and joy,  
How have I hung delighted over thee,  
Kissing thy rosy cheeks, my darling boy !

Thy first low accents it was mine to hear,  
To-day my farewell words to thee shall fly.  
Oh ! may the Lord thy shield be ever near,  
And fit thee for a mansion in the sky ! ”

And all the birds sang with her, the flowers danced upon their stalks, and the old trees nodded their heads whilst the Dustman told stories to them also.

## WEDNESDAY

تجس ہری تم  
( Oh, how the rain was pouring down ! Hialmar could hear it even in his sleep ; and when the Dustman opened the window the water came in upon the ledge ; there was quite a lake in front of the house, and on it a splendid ship.

“ Will you sail with me, little Hialmar ? ” said the Dustman. “ If you will, you shall visit foreign lands to-night, and be here again by the morning.”

مافیہ کیا  
سایس  
And now Hialmar, dressed in his Sunday clothes, was in the ship ; the weather immediately cleared up, and they floated down the street, cruised round the church, and were soon sailing upon the wide sea. They quickly lost sight of land, and could see only a number of storks, who had all come from Hialmar's country, and were going to a warmer one.

کے لے  
بازو بٹھانے کے  
The storks were flying one after another, and were already far from land, when one of them was so weary that his wings could scarcely bear him up any longer ; he was last in the train, and was soon far behind the others. He sank lower and lower, with his wings outspread ; he still endeavoured to move them, but it was all in vain ; his wings touched the ship's cordage ; he slid down the sail, and—bounce ! there he stood on the deck.

So the cabin-boy put him into the place where the hens, ducks, and turkeys were kept ; the poor stork stood amongst them quite confounded.

“ Only look, what a foolish fellow ! ” said all the hens. And the turkey-cock made himself as big as he could, and asked him who he was ; and

the ducks waddled backwards and pushed each other—"Quack, quack!" بطيخ

The stork then told them about his warm Africa, about the pyramids, and about the ostrich, who races through the desert like a wild horse. But the ducks did not understand him, and again pushed each other, saying, "Do we not all agree in thinking him very stupid?"

"Yes, indeed he is stupid!" said the turkey-cock, and began to gobble.

So the stork was silent, and thought of his Africa. "You have really very pretty slender legs!" said the turkey-cock. "What did they cost you per yard?"

"Quack, quack, quack," all the ducks began to titter; but the stork seemed not to have heard the question.

"You might just as well have laughed with them," said the turkey-cock to him, "for it was a capital joke! But perhaps it was not high enough for you? Ah! ah! he has very grand ideas; let us go on amusing ourselves." And then he gobbled, the hens cackled, and the ducks quacked; they made a horrid noise with their amusements.

But Hialmar went to the hen-house, opened the door and called the stork, who immediately jumped on deck. He had now rested himself sufficiently; and bowed his head to Hialmar, as if to thank him. He then spread his wings and flew away—whilst the hens cackled, the ducks quacked, and the turkey-cock turned red as fire.

"To-morrow we will have you all made into soup!" said Hialmar; then he awoke, and



found himself in his own little bed. A strange journey had the Dustman taken him that night !

## THURSDAY

" I'll tell you what ! " said the Dustman—" do not be afraid, and you shall see a little mouse ! " and he held out his hand, with the pretty little animal in it. " She is come to invite you to a wedding: there are two little mice here, who intend, this very night, to enter into matrimony. They live under the floor of the dining-room; theirs must be such a pretty house."

*1 1/2* " But how can I get through the little hole ? " asked Hialmar.

" Let me take care of that," said the Dustman. " I will make you very little ! " And he touched Hialmar with his magic wand, and he became smaller and smaller, till at last he was no larger than his own fingers. " Now you can borrow the tin soldiers' clothes ; I think they will just fit you ; and it looks so grand to wear uniform when you are in company."

*600* " Ah, yes ! " said Hialmar, and in another moment he was dressed like the prettiest little tin soldier.

" Will you have the goodness to sit down in your mother's thimble ? " said the little mouse. " In that case, I shall feel honoured by drawing you along."

" What ! will you really take so much trouble ? " said Hialmar ; and away they went to the mouse's wedding.

They first came to a long passage under the floor, which was high enough for the thimble to

be drawn along through it, and was lighted up with toadstools throughout.

"Is there not a pleasant smell here?" said the mouse who was drawing the thimble. "The whole passage is covered with rind of bacon; there is nothing more delightful!"

They now entered the bridal apartment: the lady mice stood on the right-hand side, whispering together, seemingly very merry; on the left side stood the gentlemen mice, who were all stroking their whiskers with their paws. In the middle of the room, the bride and bridegroom were seen standing in the scooped out rind of a cheese; and kissing each other incessantly before the eyes of all present. They were already betrothed, and were to be married immediately.

Strangers were arriving every moment; the mice almost trod each other to death; and the bridal pair had placed themselves just in the centre of the doorway, so that one could get neither out nor in. The whole room was, like the passage, covered with the rind of bacon; this was all the entertainment given. For dessert, however, a pea was exhibited, in which a little mouse, belonging to the family, had bitten the initials of the married couple. Was not this an exquisite idea?

All the mice agreed that the wedding had been extremely genteel, and the conversation delightful.

So now Hjalmar returned home; he had certainly been in most distinguished company; but still, he felt as though he had rather lowered himself, by becoming so small, and wearing the uniform of a tin soldier.

## FRIDAY

"It is wonderful what a number of old people there are, always wanting to have me with them," said the Dustman ; "especially those who have done anything wicked.

" 'Dear, good Dustman,' they say to me, 'we cannot sleep a wink all night ; we lie awake, and see all our bad deeds sitting on the edge of the bed, like little ugly goblins, and sprinkling hot water over us. If you would but come and drive them away, so that we could have a little sleep ;' and then they sigh so deeply, 'we will be sure to pay you well. Good-night, Dustman, the money is lying at the window.'—But I do not come for money," said the Dustman.

"What are we to do to-night ?" asked Hjalmar.

"Why, I do not know whether you would like to go again to a wedding ? The one of which I am now speaking is quite of another kind from yesterday's. Your sister's great doll, that looks like a man, and is called Herman, is going to marry the doll Bertha ; besides which, it is a birthday, so they will doubtless receive a great many presents."

"Oh yes ! I know that already," said Hjalmar ; "whenever the dolls want new clothes, my sister calls it either their birthday or their wedding-day. They must certainly have been married a hundred times already."

"Yes, but to-night they will be married for the hundred and first time ; and when it has come to that number, they can never be married

again. So this time the wedding will be splendid ! only look ! ”

And Hjalmar looked upon the table, where stood the little doll's house ; the windows were lighted up, and tin soldiers presented arms at the door. The bride and bridegroom were sitting on the ground, and leaning against the leg of the table ; they seemed very thoughtful ; there was, perhaps, good reason for being so. But the Dustman had, meanwhile, put on his grandmother's black gown, and married them. When the ceremony was over, all the furniture in the room began singing the following pretty song, which had been written by the lead pencil :—

“ Waft, gentle breeze, our kind farewell  
To the tiny house where the bridefolks dwell,  
With their skin of kid-leather fitting so well ;  
They are straight and upright as a tailor's ell.  
Hurrah, hurrah for beau and bell !  
Let echo repeat our kind farewell ! ”

And now presents were brought to them ; all eatables, however, they declined accepting : love was enough for them to live upon.

“ Shall we go into the country, or make a tour in some foreign land ? ” asked the bridegroom. So the swallow, who had travelled a good deal, and the old hen, who had hatched five broods of chickens, were consulted. And the swallow spoke of those beautiful, warm countries where bunches of grapes, large and heavy, hang on the vines ; where the air is so balmy, and the mountains of various hues, such as are never known here.

“ But then they have not our green cabbages ! ” said the hen. “ One summer, I and all my

chickens lived in the country ; there was a gravel-pit in which we might go and scrape about ; besides, we had access to a garden, full of green cabbages. Oh, how green they were ! I cannot imagine anything more beautiful ! ”

“ But one head of cabbage looks exactly like another,” said the swallow ; “ and then we so often have wet weather here ! ”

“ One gets accustomed to that,” said the hen.

“ But it is so cold, it freezes ! ”

“ That is good for the cabbages,” said the hen ; “ besides which, it can be warm sometimes. Did we not, four years ago, have a summer which lasted five weeks ? It was so hot that one could hardly breathe. Then, too, we have not all the poisonous animals which they have in foreign countries ; and we are free from robbers.

“ He is a blockhead who does not think our country the most beautiful of all ! He does not deserve to live here ! ” and at these words, tears rolled down the hen's cheeks. “ I too have travelled ; I have been twelve miles in a coop. There is no pleasure at all in travelling.”

“ Yes, the hen is a sensible animal ! ” said the doll Bertha. “ I do not wish to travel over the mountains ; one is always going up and down ! No, we will go to the gravel-pit, and walk in the garden, among the cabbages.”

And so it was settled.

#### SATURDAY

“ Now may I have some stories ? ” asked little Hialmar, as soon as the Dustman had put him to sleep.

"We shall have no time for them this evening," said the Dustman, spreading his picture umbrella over him. "Look at these Chinese!" The umbrella resembled a large Chinese plate, with blue trees and pointed bricks; little Chinese men and women stood nodding their heads among them.

"By to-morrow morning all the world must be put in order," said the Dustman; "it is a festival day—it is Sunday. I must go to the church-tower, to see whether the little spirits of the church are rubbing the bells, so as to make them ring merrily. I must away to the fields, to see that the winds are sweeping the dust off the grass and leaves.

"I must take down the stars in order to brighten them. I put them into my apron, but first they must be numbered: and the holes in which they sit, up in the sky, must be numbered also, that every one may return to his proper place; else they would not sit firmly, and we should have too many falling stars, one coming down after another."

"Listen to me, Mr. Dustman," said an old portrait, which hung by the wall, near where Hjalmar was sleeping. "Do you know that I am Hjalmar's great-grandfather? I am much obliged to you for telling the boy stories; but you must not puzzle him. Stars cannot be taken down and brightened; they are bodies like our earth."

"Many thanks, old great-grandfather!" said the Dustman, "many thanks. Thou art certainly very old, but I am older still! I am an old heathen; the Greeks and Romans called the God of Dreams. I have been in families of the



greatest distinction, and I go there still ! I know how to deal with great and small ! Now it is thy turn ; say what thou pleasest ! ”

“ So one is no longer allowed to speak one's mind ! ” muttered the old portrait.

And presently Hialmar awoke.

### SUNDAY

“ Good-evening ! ” said the Dustman ; and Hialmar nodded his head to him, and jumped up to turn his great-grandfather's portrait to the wall, in order that he might not interrupt them, as yesterday.

“ Now you shall tell me stories, about the five green peas who all lived in one pod ; and about the cock courting the hen ; and about the darning-needle who wished to be fashionable, and fancied herself a fine needle.”

“ One may have too much of a good thing ! ” said the Dustman. “ I would rather show you something else ; I will show you my brother. He never comes more than once to any one ; and whomsoever he visits, he takes on his horse, and tells him a story. He knows only two stories—the one unspeakably delightful, such as no one in the world can imagine ; the other so dreadful, so horrible—it is not to be described.”

And the Dustman lifted little Hialmar up to the window, saying, “ There is my brother, the other Dustman, he is also called Death ! You see he is not so frightful as he is represented in picture-books, where he seems to be all bones. No, he wears clothes embroidered with silver ; it is the gayest of uniforms ! a mantle of black

velvet flies over his horse, behind him. See how he gallops ! ”

And Hialmar saw the other Dustman ride on, and take old and young with him on his horse ; some he placed in front, and others behind ; but he always asked first, what sort of a journal they had to show.

“ Good ! ” they all replied. “ Yes, but let me see it,” said he. So they were obliged to show it to him ; and all those who had “ Very Good ” written in it, were put in front of the horse, and heard the story that was so delightful. But those who had “ Pretty Good ” or “ Bad ” inscribed in their journal, were obliged to get up behind, and listen to the horrible story. They trembled and wept ; they tried to jump down from the horse’s back, but they could not do, for they were as firmly fixed on as if they had grown there.

“ Death is a most beautiful Dustman,” said Hialmar. “ I am not afraid of him.”

“ That you should not be,” said the Dustman ; “ only take care to have a good journal to show.”

“ Ah, this is very instructive,” muttered the great-grandfather’s portrait. “ It is always of use to give one’s opinion.” He was now satisfied.

These are the stories of the Dustman ; perhaps he may tell you more this very evening.

## THE DAISY

LISTEN to my story !

In the country, close by the roadside, there stands a summer-house—you must certainly have seen it. In front is a little garden full of flowers, enclosed by white palings with green knobs ; and on a bank outside the palings there grew, amidst the freshest of grass, a little daisy. The sun shone as brightly and warmly upon the daisy as upon the splendid large flowers within the garden, and therefore it grew hourly ; so that one morning it stood fully open with its delicate white gleaming petals, which, like rays, surrounded the little yellow sun in their centre.

It never occurred to the little flower that no one saw her, hidden as she was among the grass. She was quite contented : she turned towards the warm sun, looked at it, and listened to the lark who was singing in the air.

The daisy was as happy as if it were the day of some high festival, and yet it was only Monday. The children were at school ; and, whilst they sat upon their forms and learned their lessons, the little flower upon her green stalk learned from the warm sun, and everything around her, how good God is.

Meanwhile, the little lark expressed clearly and beautifully all she felt in silence ! And the flower looked up with a sort of reverence to the happy bird who could fly and sing ; it did not distress her that she could not do the same. " I

can see and listen," thought she; "the sun shines on me, and the wind kisses me. Oh! how richly am I blessed."

There stood within the palings several grand, stiff-looking flowers; the less fragrance they had, the more airs they gave themselves. The peonies puffed themselves out in order to make themselves larger than the roses. The tulips had the gayest colours of all; they were perfectly aware of it, and held themselves as straight as a candle, that they might be the better seen.

They took no notice at all of the little flower outside the palings; but she looked all the more upon them, thinking, "How rich and beautiful they are! Yes, that noble bird will surely fly down and visit them. How happy am I, who live so near them and see their beauty!"

Just at that moment, "quirrevit!" the lark did fly down; but he came not to the peonies or the tulips; no, he flew down to the poor little daisy in the grass, who was almost frightened from pure joy, and knew not what to think, she was so surprised.

The little bird hopped about, and sang, "Oh, how soft is this grass! and what a sweet little flower blooms here, with its golden heart, and silver garment!" For the yellow centre of the daisy looked just like gold, and the little petals around gleamed silver white.

How happy the little daisy was! No one can imagine how happy. The bird kissed her with his beak, sang to her, and then flew up again into the blue sky. It was a full quarter of an hour before the flower recovered herself. Half ashamed and yet completely happy, she looked at the

flowers in the garden ; they must certainly be aware of the honour and happiness that had been conferred upon her ; they must know how delighted she was.

But the tulips held themselves twice as stiff as before, and their faces grew quite red with anger. As to the peonies, they were so thick-headed—it was, indeed, well that they could not speak, or the little daisy would have heard something not very pleasant. The poor little flower could see well that they were in an ill-humour, and she was much vexed at it.

Soon after a girl came into the garden with a knife sharp and bright ; she went up to the tulips and cut off one after another. "Oh ! that is horrible," sighed the daisy ; "it is now all over with them." The girl then went away with the tulips.

How glad was the daisy that she grew in the grass outside the palings, and was a despised little flower ! She felt really thankful ; and when the sun set, she folded her leaves, went to sleep, and dreamed all night of the sun and the beautiful bird.

The next morning, when our little flower, fresh and cheerful, again spread out all her white leaves in the bright sunshine and clear blue air, she heard the voice of the bird ; but he sang so mournfully.

Alas ! the poor lark had good reason for sorrow ; he had been caught, and put into a cage close by the open window. He sang of the joys of a free and unrestrained flight ; he sang of the young green corn in the fields, and of the pleasure of being borne up by his wings in the

open air. The poor bird was certainly very unhappy ; he sat a prisoner in his narrow cage !

The little daisy would so willingly have helped him, but how could she ? Ah, that she knew not ; she quite forgot how beautiful all around her was, how warmly the sun shone, how pretty and white her leaves were. Alas ! she could only think of the imprisoned bird—for whom it was not in her power to do anything.

All at once two little boys came out of the garden ; one of them had a knife in his hand, as large and as sharp as that with which the girl had cut the tulips. They went up straight to the little daisy, who could not imagine what they wanted.

"Here we can cut a nice piece of turf for the lark," said one of the boys ; and he began to cut deep all round the daisy, leaving her in the centre.

"Tear out the flower," said the other boy ; and the little daisy trembled all over for fear ; for she knew that if she were torn out she would die, and she wished so much to live, as she was to be put into the cage with the imprisoned lark.

"No, leave it alone !" said the first, "it looks so pretty ;" and so it was left alone, and was put into the lark's cage.

But the poor bird loudly lamented the loss of its freedom, and beat its wings against the iron bars of its cage ; and the little flower could not speak, could not say a single word of comfort to him, much as she wished to do so. Thus passed the whole morning.

"There is no water here !" said the imprisoned lark ; "they have all gone out and



forgotten me ; not a drop of water to drink ! My throat is dry and burning ! there is fire and ice within me ; and the air is so heavy ! Alas ! I must die ; I must leave the warm sunshine, the fresh green trees, and all the beautiful things which God has created."

And then he pierced his beak into the cool grass, in order to refresh himself a little ; and his eye fell upon the daisy, and the bird bowed to her, and said, "Thou too wilt wither here, thou poor little flower ! They have given me thee, and the piece of green around thee, instead of the whole world which I possessed before ! Every little blade of grass is to be to me a green tree, thy every white petal a fragrant flower ! Alas ! thou only remindest me of what I have lost."

"Oh, that I could comfort him !" thought the daisy ; but she could not move. Yet the fragrance which came from her delicate blossom was stronger than is usual with this flower ; the bird noticed it, and although, panting with thirst, he tore the green blades in very anguish, he did not touch the flower.

It was evening, and yet no one came to bring the poor bird a drop of water ; he stretched out his slender wings, and shook them convulsively. His song was a mournful "pipi" ; his little head bent towards the flowers ; and the bird's heart broke from thirst and desire. The flower could not now, as on the preceding evening, fold together her leaves and sleep ; she bent down sad and sick to the ground.

The boys did not come till the next morning ; and when they saw the bird was dead, they wept

bitterly. They dug a pretty grave, which they adorned with flower petals ; the bird's corpse was put into a pretty red box—royally was the poor bird buried ! While he lived and sang they forgot him, left him suffering in his cage, and now, he was highly honoured and bitterly bewailed.

But the piece of turf with the daisy in it was thrown out into the street : no one thought of her who had felt most for the little bird, and who had so much wished to comfort him.

## THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES

MANY years ago there was an Emperor who was so very fond of new clothes that he spent all his money in dress. He did not trouble himself in the least about his soldiers ; nor did he care to go either to the theatre or to the chase, except for the opportunities then afforded him of displaying his new clothes. He had a different suit for each hour of the day ; and, as of any other king or emperor, one is accustomed to say, " He is sitting in council," it was always said of him, " The Emperor is sitting in his wardrobe."

Time passed away merrily in the large town which was his capital ; strangers arrived every day at the court. One day two rogues, calling themselves weavers, made their appearance. They gave out that they knew how to weave stuffs of the most beautiful colours and elaborate patterns ; the clothes made from which should

have the wonderful property of remaining invisible to every one who was unfit for the office he held, or who was extraordinary simple in character.

"These must indeed be splendid clothes!" thought the Emperor. "Had I such a suit, I might, at once, find out what men in my realms are unfit for their office, and also be able to distinguish the wise from the foolish! This stuff must be woven for me immediately." And he caused large sums of money to be given to both the weavers, in order that they might begin their work at once.

So the two pretended weavers set up two looms, and affected to work very busily, though in reality they did nothing at all. They asked for the most delicate silk and the purest gold thread; put both into their own knapsacks; and then continued their pretended work at the empty looms until late at night.

"I should like to know how the weavers are getting on with my cloth," said the Emperor to himself, after some little time had elapsed. He was, however, rather embarrassed, when he remembered that a simpleton, or one unfit for his office, would be unable to see the manufacture. "To be sure," he thought, "he had nothing to risk in his own person; but yet, he would prefer sending somebody else, to bring him intelligence about the weavers and their work, before he troubled himself in the affair."

All the people throughout the city had heard of the wonderful property the cloth was to possess; and all were anxious to learn how wise,

or how ignorant, their neighbours might prove to be.

"I will send my faithful old minister to the weavers," said the Emperor at last, after some deliberation ; " he will be best able to see how the cloth looks ; for he is a man of sense, and no one can be more suitable for his office than he is."

So the faithful old minister went into the hall, where the knaves were working with all their might at their empty looms. " What can be the meaning of this ? " thought the old man, opening his eyes very wide. " I cannot discover the least bit of thread on the looms ! " However, he did not express his thoughts aloud.

The impostors requested him very courteously to be so good as to come nearer their looms ; and then asked him whether the design pleased him, and whether the colours were not very beautiful ; at the same time pointing to the empty frames. The poor old minister looked and looked, he could not discover anything on the looms, for a very good reason—there was nothing there.

" What ! " thought he again, " is it possible that I am a simpleton ? I have never thought so myself ; and no one must know it now, if I am so. Can it be that I am unfit for my office ? No, that must not be said either. I will never confess that I could not see the stuff."

" Well, Sir Minister ! " said one of the knaves, still pretending to work, " you do not say whether the stuff pleases you."

" Oh, it is excellent ! " replied the old minister, looking at the loom through his spectacles. " This

pattern, and the colours—yes, I will tell the Emperor without delay how very beautiful I think them.”

“We shall be much obliged to you,” said the impostors; and then they named the different colours and described the pattern of the pretended stuff. The old minister listened attentively to their words, in order that he might repeat them to the Emperor; and then the knaves asked for more silk and gold; saying that it was necessary to complete what they had begun. However, they put all that was given them into their knapsacks, and continued to work, with as much apparent diligence as before, at their empty looms.

The Emperor now sent another officer of his court to see how the men were getting on, and to ascertain whether the cloth would soon be ready. It was just the same with this gentleman as with the minister; he surveyed the looms on all sides, but could see nothing at all but the empty frames.

“Does not the stuff appear as beautiful to you as it did to my lord the minister?” asked the impostors of the Emperor’s second ambassador; at the same time making the same gestures as before, and talking of the design and colours which were not there.

“I certainly am not stupid!” thought the messenger. “It must be that I am not fit for my good, profitable office! That is very odd; however, no one shall know anything about it.” And accordingly he praised the stuff he could not see, and declared that he was delighted with both colours and patterns.

"Indeed, please your Imperial Majesty," said he to his sovereign, when he returned, "the cloth which the weavers are preparing is extraordinarily magnificent."

The whole city was talking of the splendid cloth which the Emperor had ordered to be woven at his own expense.

And now the Emperor himself wished to see the costly manufacture whilst it was still on the loom. Accompanied by a select number of officers of the court, among whom were the two honest men who had already admired the cloth, he went to the crafty impostors, who, as soon as they were aware of the Emperor's approach, went on working more diligently than ever; although they still did not pass a single thread through the looms.

"Is not the work absolutely magnificent?" said the two officers of the crown already mentioned. "If your Majesty will only be pleased to look at it! What a splendid design! what glorious colours!" and, at the same time, they pointed to the empty frames; for they imagined that every one else could see this exquisite piece of workmanship.

"How is this?" said the Emperor to himself. "I can see nothing! this is indeed a terrible affair! Am I a simpleton, or am I unfit to be an Emperor? That would be the worst thing that could happen.—Oh! the cloth is charming," said he aloud. "It has my complete approval." And he smiled most graciously, and looked closely at the empty looms; for on no account would he say that he could not see what two of the officers of his court had praised so much.



All his retinue now strained their eyes, hoping to discover something on the looms, but they could see no more than the others. Nevertheless, they all exclaimed, "Oh, how beautiful!" and advised his Majesty to have some new clothes made from this splendid material, for the approaching procession.

"Magnificent! charming! excellent!" resounded on all sides; and every one was uncommonly gay. The Emperor shared in the general satisfaction; and presented the impostors with the riband of an order of knighthood, to be worn in their buttonholes, and bestowed on them the title of "Gentleman Weavers."

The rogues sat up the whole of the night before the day on which the procession was to take place, and had sixteen lights burning, so that every one might see how anxious they were to finish the Emperor's new suit. They pretended to roll the cloth off the looms; cut the air with their scissors; and sewed with needles without any thread in them. "See!" cried they at last, "the Emperor's new clothes are ready!"

And now the Emperor, with all the grandees of his court, came to the weavers; and the rogues raised their arms, as if in the act of holding something up, saying, "Here are your Majesty's trousers! Here is the scarf! Here is the mantle! The whole suit is as light as a cobweb; one might fancy one has nothing at all on, when dressed in it. That, however, is the great virtue of this delicate cloth."

"Yes, indeed!" said all the courtiers, although not one of them could see anything of this exquisite manufacture.

"If your Imperial Majesty will be graciously pleased to take off your clothes, we will fit on the new suit, in front of the looking-glass."

The Emperor was accordingly undressed, and the rogues pretended to array him in his new suit; the Emperor turning round, from side to side, before the looking-glass.

"How splendid his Majesty looks in his new clothes; and how well they fit!" every one cried out. "What a design! What colours! These are indeed royal robes!"

"The canopy which is to be borne over your Majesty in the procession is waiting," announced the chief master of the ceremonies.

"I am quite ready," answered the Emperor. "Do my new clothes fit well?" asked he, turning himself round again before the looking-glass, in order that he might appear to be examining his handsome suit.

The lords of the bedchamber, who were to carry his Majesty's train, felt about on the ground, as if they were lifting up the ends of the mantle, and pretended to be carrying something; for they would by no means betray anything like simplicity or unfitness for their office.

So now the Emperor walked under his high canopy in the midst of the procession, through the streets of his capital; and all the people standing by, and those at the windows, cried out, "Oh, how beautiful are our Emperor's new clothes! What a magnificent train there is to the mantle; and how gracefully the scarf hangs!"

In short, no one would allow that he could not see these much-admired clothes; because, in doing so, he would have declared himself

either a simpleton or unfit for his office. Certainly, none of the Emperor's various suits had ever made so great an impression as these invisible ones.

"But the Emperor has nothing at all on!" said a little child. "Listen to the voice of innocence!" exclaimed his father; and what the child had said was whispered from one to another.

"But he has nothing at all on!" at last cried out all the people. The Emperor was vexed, for he knew that the people were right; but he thought the procession must go on now. And the lords of the bedchamber took greater pains than ever to appear holding up a train, although, in reality, there was no train to hold. \*

## THE REAL PRINCESS

THERE was once a Prince who wished to marry a Princess ; but then she must be a real Princess. He travelled all over the world in hopes of finding such a lady ; but there was always something wrong. Princesses he found in plenty ; but whether they were real Princesses it was impossible for him to decide, for now one thing, now another, seemed to him not quite right about the ladies. At last he returned to his palace quite cast down, because he wished so much to have a real Princess for his wife.

One evening a fearful tempest arose. It thundered and lightened, and the rain poured down from the sky in torrents ; besides, it was as dark as pitch. All at once there was heard a violent knocking at the door, and the old King, the Prince's father, went out himself to open it.

It was a Princess who was standing outside the door. What with the rain and the wind, she was in a sad condition. The water trickled down from her hair, and her clothes clung to her body. She said she was a real Princess.

"Ah, we shall soon see that !" thought the old Queen-mother. However, she said not a word of what she was going to do ; but went quietly into the bedroom, took all the bed-clothes off the bed, and put three little peas on the bedstead. She then laid twenty mattresses one upon another over the three peas, and put twenty feather-beds over the mattresses.

Upon this bed the Princess was to pass the night.

The next morning she was asked how she had slept. "Oh, very badly indeed!" she replied. "I have scarcely closed my eyes the whole night through. I do not know what was in my bed, but I had something hard under me, and am all over black and blue. It has hurt me so much!"

Now it was plain that the lady must be a real Princess, since she had been able to feel the three little peas through the twenty mattresses and twenty feather-beds. None but a real Princess could have had such a delicate sense of feeling.

The Prince accordingly made her his wife; being now convinced that he had found a real Princess. The three peas were, however, put into the cabinet of curiosities, where they are still to be seen, provided they are not lost.

Was not this a lady of real delicacy?

sprang too high, and was gone ! They sought and sought, even in the cellar ; he was nowhere to be found.

Where was he ?

He had jumped into a barrel full of all sorts of rubbish—cabbage-stalks, sweepings, dust, etc., which had fallen in from the gutter.

“ Alas ! here I lie, my gay gilding will soon be spoiled ; and what sort of trumpery can I have fallen in with ? ” And he peeped at a long cabbage-stalk which lay fearfully near him, and at a strange thing round somewhat like an apple. But it was not an apple, it was an old ball, which had lain several years in the gutter, and was quite soaked through with water.

“ Thank goodness ! At last I see an equal, with whom I may speak,” said the ball, looking fixedly at the gilt top. “ I am made of real morocco, sewed together by a young lady’s hands, and I have cork in my body ; but I shall never again be noticed by any one ! I was on the point of marriage with the swallow when I fell into the gutter, and there I have lain five years, and am now wet through. Only think what a wearisome time it is for a young lady to be in such a situation ! ”

But the top answered not a word ; he thought on his long-lamented companion ; and the more he heard the more certain he became that it was she herself.

The servant-maid now came, and was going to turn the barrel over. “ Hurrah ! ” exclaimed she, “ there is the gilt top.”

And the top was brought back to the play-room ; it was used and admired as before :



but nothing more was heard of the ball, nor did the top ever even speak of his former love for her ; such a feeling must have passed away. How could it be otherwise, when he found that she had lain five years in the gutter, and that she was so much altered he scarcely knew her again when he met her in the barrel among rubbish ?

THE END